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POEMS.

JEAN INGELow'S POEMS.

Jean Engelow's Writings.



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Very sincerely yours
John Ingellon

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JEAN INGELow. 1800-97



BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1873.

AUTHOR'S EDITION.



CAMBRIDGE:
PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.

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1873

Dedication.



TO

GEORGE K. INGELOW.

YOUR LOVING SISTER

OFFERS YOU THESE POEMS, PARTLY AS

AN EXPRESSION OF HER AFFECTION, PARTLY FOR THE

PLEASURE OF CONNECTING HER EFFORT

WITH YOUR NAME.

Kensington, June, 1863.

235909

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P O E M S.

DIVIDED.

I.

An empty sky, a world of heather,
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom;
We two among them wading together,
Shaking out honey, treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet,
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

Flusheth the rise with her purple favor,
Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring,
'Twixt the two brown butterflies waver,
Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.

We two walk till the purple dieth
And short dry grass under foot is brown,
But one little streak at a distance lieth
Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

II.

Over the grass we stepped unto it,
And God He knoweth how blithe we were!
Never a voice to bid us eschew it:
Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair!

Hey the green ribbon! we kneeled beside it,
We parted the grasses dewy and sheen;
Drop over drop there filtered and slid
A tiny bright beck that trickled between.

Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sung to us,
Light was our talk as of faëry bells—
Faëry wedding-bells faintly rung to us
Down in their fortunate parallels.

Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,
We lapped the grass on that youngling spring;
Swept back its rushes, smoothed its clover,
And said, "Let us follow it westering."

III.

A dappled sky, a world of meadows,
Circling above us the black rooks fly
Forward, backward; lo, their dark shadows
Flit on the blossoming tapestry—

Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth
As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back;
And, lo, the sun like a lover darteth
His flattering smile on her wayward track.

Sing on! we sing in the glorious
weather

Till one steps over the tiny strand,
So narrow, in sooth, that still together
On either brink we go hand in hand.

The beck grows wider, the hands must
sever.

On either margin, our songs all done,
We move apart, while she singeth ever,
Taking the course of the stooping
sun.

He prays, "Come over" — I may not
follow;

I cry, "Return" — but he cannot
come:

We speak, we laugh, but with voices
hollow;

Our hands are hanging, our hearts
are numb.

IV.

A breathing sigh, a sigh for answer,
A little talking of outward things:
The careless beck is a merry dancer,
Keeping sweet time to the air she
sings.

A little pain when the beck grows
wider;

"Cross to me now — for her wavelets
swell:"

"I may not cross" — and the voice
beside her

Faintly reacheth, though heeded well.

No backward path; ah! no returning;

No second crossing that ripple's flow:

"Come to me now, for the west is
burning;

Come ere it darkens;" — "Ah, no!
ah, no!"

Then cries of pain, and arms out-
reaching —

The beck grows wider and swift and
deep:

Passionate words as of one beseech-
ing —

The loud beck drowns them; we
walk, and weep.

V.

A yellow moon in splendor drooping,
A tired queen with her state oppressed,
Low by rushes and swordgrass stoop-
ing,

Lies she soft on the waves at rest.

The desert heavens have felt her sad-
ness;

Her earth will weep her some dewy
tears;

The wild beck ends her tune of glad-
ness,

And goeth stilly as soul that fears.

We two walk on in our grassy places

On either marge of the moonlit flood,
With the moon's own sadness in our
faces,

Where joy is withered, blossom and
bud.

VI.

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,

A little piping of leaf-hid birds;

A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,

A cloud to the eastward snowy as
curds.

Bare glassy slopes, where kids are
tethered;

Round valleys like nests all ferny-
lined;

Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops
feathered,

Swell high in their freckled robes
behind.

A rose-flush tender, a thrill, a quiver,

When golden gleams to the tree-tops
glide;

A flashing edge for the milk-white river,
The beck, a river — with still sleek
tide.

Broad and white, and polished as silver,

On she goes under fruit-laden trees;

Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver,

And 'plaineth of love's disloyalties.

Glitters the dew and shines the river,

Up comes the lily and dries her bell;

But two are walking apart for ever,

And wave their hands for a mute
farewell.

VII.

A braver swell, a swifter sliding;
The river hasteth, her banks recede:
Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding
Bear down the lily and drown the
reeds.

Stately prows are rising and bowing
(Shouts of mariners winnow the air),
And level sands for banks endowing
The tiny green ribbon that showed
so fair.

While, O my heart! as white sails
shiver,
And crowds are passing, and banks
stretch wide,
How hard to follow, with lips that
quiver,
That moving speck on the far-off
side!

Farther, farther—I see it—know it—
My eyes brim over, it melts away:
Only my heart to my heart shall show it
As I walk desolate day by day.

VIII.

And yet I know past all doubting,
truly—
A knowledge greater than grief can
dim—
I know, as he loved, he will love me
duly—
Yea, better—e'en better than I love
him.

And as I walk by the vast calm river,
The awful river so dread to see,
I say, "Thy breadth and thy depth for
ever
Are bridged by his thoughts that
cross to me."

HONORS.—PART I.

*A Scholar is musing on his Want of
Success.*

*To strive—and fail. Yes, I did
strive and fail,
I set mine eyes upon a certain night
To find a certain star—and could
not hail
With them its deep-set light.*

*Fool that I was! I will rehearse my
fault:
I, wingless, thought myself on high
to lift
Among the winged—I set these feet
that halt
To run against the swift.*

*And yet this man, that loved me so,
can write—
That loves me, I would say, can let
me see;
Or fain would have me think he
counts but light
These Honors lost to me.*

[The Letter of his Friend.]

"What are they? that old house of
yours which gave
Such welcomes oft to me, the sun-
beams fall
Still down the squares of blue and
white which pave
Its hospitable hall.

"A brave old house! a garden full of
bees,
Large dropping poppies, and queen
hollyhocks,
With butterflies for crowns—tree
peonies
And pinks and goldilocks.

"Go, when the shadow of your house
is long
Upon the garden—when some new-
waked bird,
Pecking and fluttering, chirps a sud-
den song,
And not a leaf is stirred;

"But every one drops dew from either
edge
Upon its fellow, while an amber ray
Slants up among the tree-tops like a
wedge
Of liquid gold—to play

"Over and under them, and so to fall
Upon that lane of water lying be-
low—
That piece of sky let in, that you do
call
A pond, but which I know

"To be a deep and wondrous world ;
for I

Have seen the trees within it — mar-
vellous things :

So thick no bird betwixt their leaves
could fly

But she would smite her wings ; —

"Go there, I say ; stand at the water's
brink,

And shoals of spotted grayling you
shall see

Basking between the shadows — look,
and think

'This beauty is for me ;

"For me this freshness in the morn-
ing hours ;

For me the water's clear tranquil-
lity ;

For me that soft descent of chestnut
flowers ;

The cushat's cry for me.

"The lovely laughter of the wind-
swayed wheat ;

The easy slope of yonder pastoral
hill ;

The sedgy brook whereby the red kine
meet

And wade and drink their fill.'

"Then saunter down that terrace
whence the sea

All fair with wing-like sails you may
discern ;

Be glad, and say 'This beauty is for
me —

A thing to love and learn.

"For me the bounding in of tides ;
for me

The laying bare of sands when they
retreat ;

The purple flush of calms, the spark-
ling glee

When waves and sunshine meet.'

"So, after gazing, homeward turn, and
mount

To that long chamber in the roof ;
there tell

Your heart the laid-up lore it holds to
count

And prize and ponder well.

"The lookings onward of the race
before

It had a past to make it look behind ;
Its reverent wonders, and its doubtings

sore,

Its adorations blind.

"The thunder of its war-songs, and
the glow

Of chants to freedom by the old
world sung ;

The sweet love cadences that long ago
Dropped from the old world

tongue.

"And then this new-world lore that
takes account

Of tangled star-dust ; maps the triple
whirl

Of blue and red and argent worlds that
mount

And greet the IRISH EARL ;

"Or float across the tube that HER-
SCHEL sways,

Like pale-rose chaplets, or like sap-
phire mist ;

Or hang or droop along the heavenly
ways,

Like scarfs of amethyst.

"O strange it is and wide the new-
world lore,

For next it treateth of our native
dust !

Must dig out buried monsters, and
explore

The green earth's fruitful crust ;

"Must write the story of her seething
youth —

How lizards paddled in her luke-
warm seas ;

Must show the cones she ripened, and
forsooth

Count seasons on her trees ;

"Must know her weight, and pry into
her age,

Count her old beach lines by their
tidal swell ;

Her sunken mountains name, her craters gauge,
Her cold volcanoes tell;

"And treat her as a ball, that one might pass
From this hand to the other—such a ball
As he could measure with a blade of grass,
And say it was but small!

"Honors! O friend, I pray you bear with me:
The grass hath time to grow in meadow lands,
And leisurely the opal murmuring sea
Breaks on her yellow sands;

"And leisurely the ring-dove on her nest
Broods till her tender chick will peck the shell;
And leisurely down fall from ferny crest
The dew-drops on the well;

"And leisurely your life and spirit grew,
With yet the time to grow and ripen free:
No judgment past withdraws that boon from you,
Nor granteth it to me.

"Still must I plod, and still in cities moil;
From precious leisure, learned leisure far,
Dull my best self with handling common soil;
Yet mine those honors are.

"Mine they are called; they are a name which means,
'This man had steady pulses, tranquil nerves;
Here, as in other fields, the most he gleans
Who works and never swerves.

"We measure not his mind; we cannot tell

What lieth under, over, or beside
The test we put him to; he doth excel,
We know, where he is tried;

"But, if he boast some further excellence—
Mind to create as well as to attain;
To sway his peers by golden eloquence,
As wind doth shift a fane;

"To sing among the poets—we are nought;
We cannot drop a line into that sea
And read its fathoms off, nor gauge a thought,
Nor map a simile.

"It may be of all voices sublunar
The only one he echoes we did try;
We may have come upon the only star
That twinkles in his sky.'

"And so it was with me."
*O false my friend!
False, false, a random charge, a
blame undue;
Wrest not fair reasoning to a crooked
end:
False, false, as you are true!*

But I read on: "And so it was with me;
Your golden constellations lying apart
They neither hailed nor greeted heartily,
Nor noted on their chart.

"And yet to you and not to me belong
Those finer instincts that, like second sight
And hearing, catch creation's under-song,
And see by inner light.

"You are a well, whereon I, gazing, see
Reflections of the upper heavens—a well
From whence come deep, deep echoes up to me—
Some underwave's low swell.

"I cannot soar into the heights you
show,
Nor dive among the deeps that you
reveal;
But it is much that high things ARE to
know,
That deep things ARE to feel.

"'Tis yours, not mine, to pluck out of
your breast
Some human truth, whose workings
recondite
Were unattired in words, and mani-
fest
And hold it forth to light,

"And cry, 'Behold this thing that I
have found.'
And though they knew not of it till
that day,
Nor should have done with no man to
expound
Its meaning, yet they say,

"We do accept it: lower than the
shoals
We skim, this diver went, nor did
create,
But find it for us deeper in our souls
Than we can penetrate.'

"You were to me the world's inter-
preter,
The man that taught me Nature's
unknown tongue,
And to the notes of her wild dulcimer
First set sweet words and sung.

"And what am I to you? A steady
hand
To hold, a steadfast heart to trust
withal;
Merely a man that loves you, and will
stand
By you, whate'er befall.

"But need we praise his tendance
tutelar
Who feeds a flame that warms him?
Yet 'tis true
I love you for the sake of what you are,
And not of what you do: —

"As heaven's high twins, whereof in
Tyrian blue
The one revolveth; through his
course immense
Might love his fellow of the damask
hue,
For like, and difference.

"For different pathways ever more
decreed
To intersect, but not to interfere;
For common goal, two aspects, and
one speed,
One centre and one year;

"For deep affinities, for drawings
strong,
That by their nature each must needs
exert;
For loved alliance, and for union long,
That stands before desert.

"And yet desert makes brighter not
the less,
For nearest his own star he shall not
fail
To think those rays unmatched for
nobleness,
That distance counts but pale.

"Be pale afar, since still to me you
shine,
And must while Nature's eldest law
shall hold;" —
*Ah, there's the thought which makes
his random line
Dear as refined gold!*

*Then shall I drink this draught of
oxymel,
Part sweet, part sharp? Myself
o'erprized to know
Is sharp; the cause is sweet, and
truth to tell
Few would that cause forego,*

*Which is, that this of all the men on
earth
Doth love me well enough to count
me great —
To think my soul and his of equal
girth —
O liberal estimate!*

*And yet it is so ; he is bound to me,
For human love makes aliens near
of kin ;
By it I rise, there is equality :
I rise to thee, my twin.*

*"Take courage" — courage ! ay, my
purple peer,
I will take courage ; for thy Tyrian
rays
Refresh me to the heart, and strangely
dear
And healing is thy praise.*

*"Take courage," quoth he, "and re-
spect the mind
Your Maker gave, for good your fate
fulfil ;
The fate round many hearts your own
to wind."
Twin soul, I will ! I will !*

HONORS. — PART II.

The Answer.

As one who, journeying, checks the
rein in haste
Because a chasm doth yawn across
his way
Too wide for leaping, and too steeply
faced
For climber to essay —

As such an one, being brought to sud-
den stand,
Doubts all his foregone path if 'twere
the true,
And turns to this and then to the other
hand
As knowing not what to do, —

So I, being checked, am with my path
at strife
Which led to such a chasm, and there
doth end.
False path ! it cost me priceless years
of life,
My well-beloved friend.

There fell a flute when Ganymede went
up —
The flute that he was wont to play
upon :
It dropped beside the jonquil's milk-
white cup,
And freckled cowslips wan —

Dropped from his heedless hand when,
dazed and mute,
He sailed upon the eagle's quivering
wing,
Aspiring, panting — ay, it dropped —
the flute
Erewhile a cherished thing.

Among the delicate grasses and the
bells
Of crocuses that spotted a rill side,
I picked up such a flute, and its clear
swells
To my young lips replied.

I played thereon, and its response was
sweet ;
But, lo, they took from me that sol-
acing reed.
"O shame !" they said ; "such music
is not meet ;
Go up like Ganymede.

"Go up, despise these humble grassy
things,
Sit on the golden edge of yonder
cloud."
Alas ! though ne'er for me those eagle
wings
Stooped from their eyrie proud.

My flute ! and flung away its echoes
sleep ;
But as for me, my life-pulse beateth
low ;
And like a last-year's leaf enshrouded
deep
Under the drifting snow,

Or like some vessel wrecked upon the
sand
Of torrid swamps, with all her mer-
chandise,
And left to rot betwixt the sea and land,
My helpless spirit lies.

Ruing, I think for what then was I
made;

What end appointed for — what use
designed?

Now let me right this heart that was
bewrayed—

Unveil these eyes gone blind.

My well-beloved friend, at noon to-day
Over our cliffs a white mist lay un-
furled,

So thick, one standing on their brink
might say,

Lo, here doth end the world.

A white abyss beneath, and nought be-
side;

Yet, hark! a cropping sound not ten
feet down:

Soon I could trace some browsing lambs
that hied

Through rock-paths cleft and
brown.

And here and there green tufts of grass
peered through,

Salt lavender, and sea thrift; then
behold,

The mist, subsiding ever, bared to view
A beast of giant mould.

She seemed a great sea monster lying
content

With all her cubs about her: but
deep—deep—

The subtle mist went floating; its de-
scent

Showed the world's end was steep.

It shook, it melted, shaking more, till,
lo,

The sprawling monster was a rock;
her brood

Were boulders, whereon seamews white
as snow

Sat watching for their food.

Then once again it sank, its day was
done:

Part rolled away, part vanished ut-
terly,

And glimmering softly under the white
sun,

Behold! a great white sea.

O that the mist which veileth my To-
come

Would so dissolve and yield unto
mine eyes

A worthy path! I'd count not wear-
some

Long toil, nor enterprise,

But strain to reach it; ay, with wrest-
lings stout

And hopes that even in the dark will
grow

(Like plants in dungeons, reaching
feelers out),

And ploddings wary and slow.

Is there such path already made to fit
The measure of my foot? It shall
atone

For much, if I at length may light on it
And know it for mine own.

But is there none? why, then 'tis more
than well:

And glad at heart myself will hew
one out,

Let me be only sure; for, sooth to tell,
The sorest dole is doubt—

Doubt, a blank twilight of the heart,
which mars

All sweetest colors in its dimness
same;

A soul-mist, through whose rifts famil-
iar stars

Beholding, we misname.

A ripple on the inner sea, which shakes
Those images that on its breast re-
posed;

A fold upon the wind-swayed flag, that
breaks

The motto it disclosed.

O doubt! O doubt! I know my destiny;
I feel thee fluttering bird-like in my
breast;

I cannot loose, but I will sing to thee,
And flatter thee to rest.

There is no certainty, "my bosom's
guest,"

No proving for the things whereof
ye wot;

For, like the dead to sight unmanifest,
They are, and they are not.

But surely as they are, for God is truth,
And as they are not, for we saw them
die,

So surely from the heaven drops light
for youth,
If youth will walk thereby.

And can I see this light? It may be
so;

"But see it thus and thus," my
fathers said.

The living do not rule this world; ah,
no!

It is the dead, the dead.

Shall I be slave to every noble soul,
Study the dead, and to their spirits
bend;

Or learn to read my own heart's folded
scroll,
And make self-rule my end?

Thought from *without* — O shall I take
on trust,

And life from others modelled steal
or win;

Or shall I heave to light, and clear of
rust

My true life from *within*.

O, let me be myself! But where, O
where,

Under this heap of precedent, this
mound

Of customs, modes, and maxims, cum-
brance rare,

Shall the *Myself* be found?

O thou *Myself*, thy fathers thee de-
barred

None of their wisdom, but their folly
came

Therewith; they smoothed thy path, but
made it hard

For thee to quit the same.

With glosses they obscured God's nat-
ural truth,

And with tradition tarnished His re-
vealed;

With vain protections they endangered
youth,

With layings bare they sealed.

What aileth thee, myself? Alas! thy
hands

Are tired with old opinions—heir
and son,

Thou hast inherited thy father's lands
And all his debts thereon.

O that some power would give me
Adam's eyes!

O for the straight simplicity of Eve!
For I see nought, or grow, poor fool,
too wise

With seeing to believe.

Exemplars may be heaped until they
hide

The rules that they were made to
render plain;

Love may be watched, her nature to
decide,

Until love's self doth wane.

Ah me! and when forgotten and fore-
gone

We leave the learning of departed
days,

And cease the generations past to con,
Their wisdom and their ways —

When fain to learn we lean into the
dark,

And grope to feel the floor of the
abyss,

Or find the secret boundary lines which
mark

Where soul and matter kiss —

Fair world! these puzzled souls of ours
grow weak

With beating their bruised wings
against the rim

That bounds their utmost flying, when
they seek

The distant and the dim.

We pant, we strain like birds against
their wires;

Are sick to reach the vast and the
beyond; —

And what avails, if still to our desires
Those far-off gulfs respond ?

Contentment comes not therefore ; still
there lies
An outer distance when the first is
hailed,
And still for ever yawns before our eyes
An UTMOST—that is veiled.

Searching those edges of the universe,
We leave the central fields a fallow
part ;
To feed the eye more precious things
amerce,
And starve the darkened heart.

Then all goes wrong: the old founda-
tions rock,
One scorns at him of old who gazed
unshod ;
One striking with a pickaxe thinks the
shock
Shall move the seat of God.

A little way, a very little way
(Life is so short), they dig into the
rind,
And they are very sorry, so they say,—
Sorry for what they find.

But truth is sacred—ay, and must be
told :
There is a story long beloved of
man ;
We must forego it, for it will not hold—
Nature had no such plan.

And then, “if God hath said it,” some
should cry,
“We have the story from the foun-
tain head :”
Why, then, what better than the old
reply,
The first “Yea, HATH God said?”

The garden, O the garden, must it go,
Source of our hope and our most
dear regret ?
The ancient story, must it no more show
How men may win it yet ?

And all upon the Titan child’s decree,
The baby science, born but yesterday,

That in its rash unlearned infancy
With shells and stones at play,

And delving in the outworks of this
world,
And little crevices that it could reach,
Discovered certain bones laid up, and
furled
Under an ancient beach,

And other waifs that lay to its young
mind
Some fathoms lower than they ought
to lie,
By gain whereof it could not fail to find
Much proof of ancients,

Hints at a pedigree withdrawn and vast,
Terrible deeps, and old obscurities,
Or soulless origin, and twilight passed
In the primeval seas,

Whereof it tells, as thinking it hath
been
Of truth not meant for man inheri-
tor ;
As if this knowledge Heaven had ne’er
foreseen
And not provided for !

Knowledge ordained to live! although
the fate
Of much that went before it was—to
die,
And be called ignorance by such as
wait
Till the next drift comes by.

O marvellous credulity of man !
If God indeed kept secret, couldst
thou know
Or follow up the mighty Artisan
Unless He willed it so ?

And canst thou of the Maker think in
sooth
That of the Made He shall be found
at fault,
And dream of wresting from Him hid-
den truth
By force or by assault ?

But if he keeps not secret—if thine
eyes

He openeth to His wondrous work
of late—

Think how in soberness thy wisdom lies,
And have the grace to wait.

Wait, nor against the half-learned les-
son fret,

Nor chide at old belief as if it erred,
Because thou canst not reconcile as yet
The Worker and the word.

Either the Worker did in ancient days
Give us the word, His tale of love
and might;

(And if in truth He gave it us, who says
He did not give it right?)

Or else He gave it not, and then indeed
We know not if HE is—by whom
our years

Are portioned, who the orphan moons
doth lead,

And the unfathered spheres.

We sit unowned upon our burial sod,
And know not whence we come or
whose we be,

Comfortless mourners for the mount of
God,

The rocks of Calvary:

Bereft of heaven, and of the long-loved
page

Wrought us by some who thought
with death to cope;

Despairing comforters, from age to age
Sowing the seeds of hope:

Gracious deceivers, who have lifted us
Out of the slough where passed our
unknown youth;

Beneficent liars, who have gifted us
With sacred love of truth!

Farewell to them: yet pause ere thou
unmoor

And set thine ark adrift on unknown
seas;

How wert thou bettered so, or more
secure

Thou, and thy destinies!

And if thou searchest, and art made to
fear

Facing of unread riddles dark and
hard,

And mastering not their majesty austere,
Their meaning locked and barred:

How would it make the weight and
wonder less,

If, lifted from immortal shoulders
down,

The worlds were cast on seas of empti-
ness

In realms without a crown,

And (if there were no God) were left
to rue

Dominion of the air and of the fire?

Then if there be a God, "Let God be
true,

And every man a liar."

But as for me, I do not speak as one

That is exempt: I am with life at
feud:

My heart reproacheth me, as there were
none

Of so small gratitude;

Wherewith shall I console thee, heart
o' mine,

And still thy yearning and resolve
thy doubt?

That which I know, and that which I
divine,

Alas! have left thee out.

I have aspired to know the might of
God,

As if the story of His love was
furled,

Nor sacred foot the grasses e'er had
trod

Of this redeemed world:—

Have sunk my thoughts as lead into
the deep,

To grope for that abyss whence evil
grew,

And spirits of ill, with eyes that cannot
weep,

Hungry and desolate flew;

As if their legions did not one day
crowd

The death-pangs of the Conquering
Good to see!

As if a sacred head had never bowed
In death for man—for me;

Nor ransomed back the souls beloved,
the sons

Of men, from thralldom with the
nether kings.

In that dark country where those evil
ones

Trail their unhallowed wings.

And didst Thou love the race that
loved not Thee,

And didst Thou take to heaven a
human brow?

Dost plead with man's voice by the
marvellous sea?

Art Thou his kinsman now?

O God, O kinsman loved, but not
enough!

O man, with eyes majestic after
death,

Whose feet have toiled along our path-
ways rough,

Whose lips drawn human breath!

By that one likeness which is ours and
Thine,

By that one nature which doth hold
us kin,

By that high heaven where, sinless,
Thou dost shine

To draw us sinners in,

By Thy last silence in the judgment-
hall,

By long foreknowledge of the deadly
tree,

By darkness, by the wormwood and the
gall,

I pray Thee visit me.

Come, lest this heart should, cold and
cast away,

Die ere the guest adored she enter-
tain—

Lest eyes which never saw Thine
earthly day

Should miss Thy heavenly reign.

Come weary-eyed from seeking in the
night

Thy wanderers strayed upon the
pathless wold,

Who wounded, dying, cry to Thee for
light,

And cannot find their fold.

And deign, O Watcher, with the sleep-
less brow,

Pathetic in its yearning—deign re-
ply:

Is there, O is there aught that such as
Thou

Wouldst take from such as I?

Are there no briars across Thy pathway
thrust?

Are there no thorns that compass it
about?

Nor any stones that Thou wilt deign
to trust

My hands to gather out?

O, if thou wilt, and if such bliss might
be,

It were a cure for doubt, regret, de-
lay—

Let my lost pathway go—what aileth
me?—

There is a better way.

What though unmarked the happy
workman toil,

And break unthanked of man the
stubborn clod?

It is enough, for sacred is the soil,

Dear are the hills of God.

Far better in its place the lowliest bird
Should sing aright to Him the low-
liest song,

Than that a seraph strayed should take
the word

And sing His glory wrong.

Friend, it is time to work. I say to
thee,

Thou dost all earthly good by much
excel;

Thou and God's blessing are enough
for me:

My work, my work—farewell!

REQUIESCAT IN PACE!

O my heart, my heart is sick awishing and awaiting:

The lad took up his knapsack, he went, he went his way;
And I looked on for his coming, as a prisoner through the grating
Looks and longs and longs and wishes for its opening day.

On the wild purple mountains, all alone with no other,
The strong terrible mountains, he longed, he longed to be;
And he stooped to kiss his father, and he stooped to kiss his mother,
And till I said "Adieu, sweet Sir," he quite forgot me.

He wrote of their white raiment, the ghostly capes that screen them,
Of the storm winds that beat them, their thunder-rents and scars,
And the paradise of purple, and the golden slopes between them,
And fields, where grow God's gentian bells, and His crocus stars.

He wrote of frail gauzy clouds, that drop on them like fleeces,
And make green their fir forests, and feed their mosses hoar;
Or come sailing up the valleys, and get wrecked and go to pieces,
Like sloops against their cruel strength: then he wrote no more.

O the silence that came next, the patience and long aching!
They never said so much as "He was a dear loved son;"
Not the father to the mother moaned, that dreary stillness breaking:
"Ah! wherefore did he leave us so — this, our only one?"

They sat within, as waiting, until the neighbors prayed them,
At Cromer, by the sea-coast, 'twere peace and change to be;
And to Cromer, in their patience, or that urgency affrayed them,
Or because the tidings tarried, they came, and took me.

It was three months and over since the dear lad had started:
On the green downs at Cromer I sat to see the view;
On an open space of herbage, where the ling and fern had parted,
Betwixt the tall white lighthouse towers, the old and the new.

Below me lay the wide sea, the scarlet sun was stooping,
And he dyed the waste water, as with a scarlet dye;
And he dyed the lighthouse towers; every bird with white wing swooping
Took his colors, and the cliffs did, and the yawning sky.

Over grass came that strange flush, and over ling and heather,
Over flocks of sheep and lambs, and over Cromer town;
And each filmy cloudlet crossing drifted like a scarlet feather
Torn from the folded wings of clouds, while he settled down.

When I looked, I dared not sigh: — In the light of God's splendor,
With His daily blue and gold, who am I? what am I?
But that passion and outpouring seemed an awful sign and tender,
Like the blood of the Redeemer, shown on earth and sky.

O for comfort, O the waste of a long doubt and trouble!
On that sultry August eve trouble had made me meek:
I was tired of my sorrow — O so faint, for it was double
In the weight of its oppression, that I could not speak!

REQUIESCAT IN PACE!

And a little comfort grew, while the dimmed eyes were feeding,
 And the dull ears with murmur of waters satisfied;
 But a dream came slowly nigh me, all my thoughts and fancy leading
 Across the bounds of waking life to the other side.

And I dreamt that I looked out, to the waste waters turning,
 And saw the flakes of scarlet from wave to wave tossed on;
 And the scarlet mix with azure, where a heap of gold lay burning
 On the clear remote sea reaches; for the sun was gone.

Then I thought a far-off shout dropped across the still water —
 A question as I took it, for soon an answer came
 From the tall white ruined lighthouse: "If it be the old man's daughter
 That we wot of," ran the answer, "what then — who's to blame?"

I looked up at the lighthouse all roofless and storm-broken:
 A great white bird sat on it, with neck stretched to sea;
 Unto somewhat which was sailing in a skiff the bird had spoken,
 And a trembling seized my spirit, for they talked of me.

I was the old man's daughter, the bird went on to name him;
 "He loved to count the starlings as he sat in the sun;
 Long ago he served with Nelson, and his story did not shame him:
 Ay, the old man was a good man — and his work was done."

The skiff was like a crescent, ghost of some moon departed,
 Frail, white, she rocked and curtsied as the red wave she crossed,
 And the thing within sat paddling, and the crescent dipped and darted,
 Flying on, again was shouting, but the words were lost.

I said, "That thing is hooded; I could hear but that floweth
 The great hood below its mouth:" then the bird made reply,
 "If they know not, more's the pity, for the little shrewmouse knoweth,
 And the kite knows, and the eagle, and the glead and pye."

And he stooped to whet his beak on the stones of the coping;
 And when once more the shout came, in querulous tones he spake,
 "What I said was 'more's the pity;' if the heart be long past hoping,
 Let it say of death, 'I know it,' or doubt on and break.

"Men must die — one dies by day, and near him moans his mother,
 They dig his grave, tread it down, and go from it full loth:
 And one dies about the midnight, and the wind moans, and no other,
 And the snows give him a burial — and God loves them both.

"The first hath no advantage — it shall not soothe his slumber
 That a lock of his brown hair his father aye shall keep;
 For the last, he nothing grudgeth, it shall nought his quiet cumber,
 That in a golden mesh of his callow eaglets sleep.

"Men must die when all is said, e'en the kite and glead know it,
 And the lad's father knew it, and the lad, the lad too;
 It was never kept a secret, waters bring it and winds blow it,
 And he met it on the mountain — why then make ado?"

With that he spread his white wings, and swept across the water,
 Lit upon the hooded head, and it and all went down;
 And they laughed as they went under, and I woke, "the old man's daughter,"
 And looked across the slope of grass, and at Cromer town.

And I said, "Is that the sky, all gray and silver suited?"
 And I thought, "Is that the sea that lies so white and wan?
 I have dreamed as I remember: give me time — I was reputed
 Once to have a steady courage — O, I fear 'tis gone!"

And I said, "Is this my heart? if it be, low 'tis beating,
 So he lies on the mountain, hard by the eagles' brood;
 I have had a dream this evening, while the white and gold were fleeting,
 But I need not, need not tell it — where would be the good?"

"Where would be the good to them, his father and his mother?
 For the ghost of their dead hope appeareth to them still.
 While a lonely watch-fire smoulders, who its dying red would smother,
 That gives what little light there is to a darksome hill?"

I rose up, I made no moan, I did not cry nor falter,
 But slowly in the twilight I came to Cromer town.
 What can wringing of the hands do that which is ordained to alter?
 He had climbed, had climbed the mountain, he would ne'er come down.

But, O my first, O my best, I could not choose but love thee!
 O, to be a wild white bird, and seek thy rocky bed!
 From my breast I'd give thee burial, pluck the down and spread above thee;
 I would sit and sing thy requiem on the mountain head.

Fare thee well, my love of loves! would I had died before thee!
 O, to be at least a cloud, that near thee I might flow,
 Solemnly approach the mountain, weep away my being o'er thee,
 And veil thy breast with icicles, and thy brow with snow!

SUPPER AT THE MILL.

Mother. Well, Frances.

Frances. Well, good mother, how are you?

M. I'm hearty, lass, but warm; the weather's warm:

I think 'tis mostly warm on market days.

I met with George behind the mill: said he,

"Mother, go in and rest awhile."

F. Ay, do,
 And stay to supper; put your basket down.

M. Why, now, it is not heavy?

F. Willie, man,
 Get up and kiss your Granny. Heavy,
 no!

Some call good churning luck; but,
 luck or skill,

Your butter mostly comes as firm and
 sweet

As if 'twas Christmas. So you sold it
 all?

M. All but this pat that I put by for
 George;

He always loved my butter.

F. That he did.

M. And has your speckled hen
 brought off her brood?

F. Not yet; but that old duck I told
 you of,
 She hatched eleven out of twelve to-
 day.

Child. And, Granny, they're so yel-
 low.

M. Ay, my lad,
Yellow as gold — yellow as Willie's hair.
C. They're all mine, Granny — father
says they're mine.

M. To think of that!

F. Yes, Granny, only think!
Why, father means to sell them when
they're fat,
And put the money in the savings bank,
And all against our Willie goes to
school:

But Willie would not touch them — no,
not he;
He knows that father would be angry
else.

C. But I want one to play with — O,
I want

A little yellow duck to take to bed!

M. What! would you rob the poor
old mother, then?

F. Now, Granny, if you'll hold the
babe awhile;

'Tis time I took up Willie to his crib.

[*Exit FRANCES.*]

[*Mother sings to the infant.*]

Playing on the virginals,
Who but I? Sae glad, sae free,
Smelling for all cordials,
The green mint and marjorie;
Set among the budding broom,
Kingcup and daffodilly,
By my side I made him room:
O love my Willie!

"Like me, love me, girl o' gowd,"
Sang he to my nimble strain;
Sweet his ruddy lips o'erflowed
Till my heartstrings rang again:
By the broom, the bonny broom,
Kingcup and daffodilly,
In my heart I made him room:
O love my Willie!

"Pipe and play, dear heart," sang he,
"I must go, yet pipe and play;
Soon I'll come and ask of thee
For an answer yea or nay;"
And I waited till the flocks
Panted in yon waters stilly,
And the corn stood in the shocks:
O love my Willie!

I thought first when thou didst come
I would wear the ring for thee,
But the year told out its sum
Ere again thou sat'st by me;
Thou hadst nought to ask that day
By kingcup and daffodilly;
I said neither yea nor nay:
O love my Willie!

Enter GEORGE.

G. Well, mother, 'tis a fortnight now,
or more,
Since I set eyes on you.

M. Ay, George, my dear,
I reckon you've been busy: so have we.

G. And how does father?

M. He gets through his work,
But he grows stiff, a little stiff, my dear;
He's not so young, you know, by twenty
years,
As I am — not so young by twenty years,
And I'm past sixty.

G. Yet he's hale and stout,
And seems to take a pleasure in his
pipe;
And seems to take a pleasure in his
cows,
And a pride, too.

M. And well he may, my dear.

G. Give me the little one, he tires
your arm;
He's such a kicking, crowing, wakeful
rogue,
He almost wears our lives out with his
noise

Just at day-dawning, when we wish to
sleep.

What! you young villain, would you
clench your fist

In father's curls? a dusty father, sure,
And you're as clean as wax.

Ay, you may laugh;
But if you live a seven years more or so,
These hands of yours will all be brown
and scratched

With climbing after nest-eggs. They'll
go down

As many rat-holes as are round the
mere;

And you'll love mud, all manner of
mud and dirt,

As your father did afore you, and you'll
wade

After young water-birds; and you'll
get bogged
Setting of eel-traps, and you'll spoil
your clothes,
And come home torn and dripping:
then, you know,
You'll feel the stick—you'll feel the
stick, my lad!

Enter FRANCES.

F. You should not talk so to the
blessed babe—

How can you, George? why, he may
be in heaven

Before the time you tell of.

M. Look at him:
So earnest, such an eager pair of eyes!
He thrives, my dear.

F. Yes, that he does, thank God!
My children are all strong.

M. 'Tis much to say;
Sick children fret their mothers' hearts
to shreds,

And do no credit to their keep nor care.
Where is your little lass?

F. Your daughter came
And begged her of us for a week or so.

M. Well, well, she might be wiser,
that she might,
For she can sit at ease and pay her
way;
A sober husband, too—a cheerful
man—

Honest as ever stepped, and fond of
her;

Yet she is never easy, never glad,
Because she has not children. Well-a-
day!

If she could know how hard her mother
worked,

And what ado I had, and what a moil
With my half-dozen! Children, ay,
forsooth,

They bring their own love with them
when they come,

But if they come not there is peace and
rest;

The pretty lambs! and yet she cries
for more:

Why, the world's full of them, and so
is heaven—

They are not rare.

G. No, mother, not at
all;

But Hannah must not keep our Fanny
long—

She spoils her.

M. Ah! folks spoil their
children now;

When I was a young woman 'twas not
so;

We made our children fear us, made
them work,

Kept them in order.

G. Were not proud
of them—

Eh, mother?

M. I set store by mine, 'tis
true,

But then I had good cause.

G. My lad,
d'ye hear?

Your Granny was not proud, by no
means proud!

She never spoilt your father—no, not
she,

Nor ever made him sing at harvest-
home,

Nor at the forge, nor at the baker's
shop,

Nor to the doctor while she lay abed
Sick, and he crept up stairs to share
her broth.

M. Well, well, you were my young-
est, and, what's more,
Your father loved to hear you sing—he
did,

Although, good man, he could not tell
one tune

From the other.

F. No, he got his voice
from you:

Do use it, George, and send the child
to sleep.

G. What must I sing?

F. The ballad of the man
That is so shy he cannot speak his mind.

G. Ay, of the purple grapes and
crimson leaves;

But, mother, put your shawl and bon-
net off.

And, Frances, lass, I brought some
cresses in:

Just wash them, toast the bacon, break
some eggs,

And let's to supper shortly.

[Sings.]

My neighbor White—we met to-day—
He always had a cheerful way,
As if he breathed at ease;
My neighbor White lives down the
glade,
And I live higher, in the shade
Of my old walnut-trees.

So many lads and lasses small,
To feed them all, to clothe them all,
Must surely tax his wit;
I see his thatch when I look out,
His branching roses creep about,
And vines half smother it.

There white-haired urchins climb his
eaves,
And little watch-fires heap with leaves,
And milky filberts hoard;
And there his oldest daughter stands
With downcast eyes and skilful hands
Before her ironing-board.

She comforts all her mother's days,
And with her sweet obedient ways
She makes her labor light;
So sweet to hear, so fair to see!
O, she is much too good for me,
That lovely Lettice White!

'Tis hard to feel one's self a fool!
With that same lass I went to school—
I then was great and wise;
She read upon an easier book,
And I—I never cared to look
Into her shy blue eyes.

And now I know they must be there,
Sweet eyes, behind those lashes fair
That will not raise their rim:
If maids be shy, he cures who can;
But if a man be shy—a man—
Why then the worse for him!

My mother cries, "For such a lad
A wife is easy to be had
And always to be found;
A finer scholar scarce can be,
And for a foot and leg," says she,
"He beats the country round!

"My handsome boy must stoop his head
To clear her door whom he would wed."

Weak praise, but fondly sung!
"O mother! scholars sometimes fail—
And what can foot and leg avail
To him that wants a tongue?"

When by her ironing-board I sit,
Her little sisters round me flit,
And bring me forth their store;
Dark cluster grapes of dusty blue,
And small sweet apples, bright of hue
And crimson to the core.

But she abideth silent, fair;
All shaded by her flaxen hair
The blushes come and go;
I look, and I no more can speak
Than the red sun that on her cheek
Smiles as he lieth low.

Sometimes the roses by the latch,
Or scarlet vine-leaves from her thatch,
Come sailing down like birds;
When from their drifts her board I clear,
She thanks me, but I scarce can hear
The shyly uttered words.

Oft have I wooed sweet Lettice White
By daylight and by candlelight
When we two were apart.
Some better day come on apace,
And let me tell her face to face,
"Maiden, thou hast my heart."

How gently rock yon poplars high
Against the reach of primrose sky
With heaven's pale candles stored!
She sees them all, sweet Lettice White;
I'll e'en go sit again to-night
Beside her ironing-board!

Why, you young rascal! who would
think it, now?
No sooner do I stop than you look up.
What would you have your poor old
father do?

'Twas a brave song, long-winded, and
not loud.

M. He heard the bacon
sputter on the fork,
And heard his mother's step across the
floor.

Where did you get that song?—'tis new to me.

G. I bought it of a pedlar.

M. Did you so?
Well, you were always for the love-songs, George.

F. My dear, just lay his head upon your arm,

And if you'll pace and sing two minutes more

He needs must sleep—his eyes are full of sleep.

G. Do you sing, mother.

F. Ay, good mother, do;
'Tis long since we have heard you.

M. Like enough;
I'm an old woman, and the girls and lads

I used to sing to sleep o'er top me now.
What should I sing for?

G. Why, to pleasure us.
Sing in the chimney corner, where you sit,

And I'll pace gently with the little one.

[Mother sings.]

When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,

My old sorrow wakes and cries,
For I know there is dawn in the far, far north,

And a scarlet sun doth rise;
Like a scarlet fleece the snow-field spreads,

And the icy founts run free,
And the bergs begin to bow their heads,

And plunge, and sail in the sea.

O my lost love, and my own, own love,
And my love that loved me so!

Is there never a chink in the world above

Where they listen for words from below?

Nay, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore,

I remember all that I said,
And now thou wilt hear me no more—no more

Till the sea gives up her dead.

Thou didst set thy foot on the ship, and sail

To the ice-fields and the snow;
Thou wert sad, for thy love did nought avail,

And the end I could not know;
How could I tell I should love thee to-day,

Whom that day I held not dear?
How could I know I should love thee away

When I did not love thee anear?

We shall walk no more through the sodden plain

With the faded bents o'erspread,
We shall stand no more by the seething main

While the dark wrack drives o'er-head;

We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,

Where thy last farewell was said:
But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again

When the sea gives up her dead.

F. Asleep at last, and time he was, indeed.

Turn back the cradle-quilt, and lay him in;

And, mother, will you please to draw your chair?—

The supper's ready.

SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER.

WHILE ripening corn grew thick and deep,

And here and there men stood to reap,
One morn I put my heart to sleep,

And to the lanes I took my way.
The goldfinch on a thistle-head

Stood scattering seedlets while she fed;
The wrens their pretty gossip spread,

Or joined a random roundelay.

On hanging cobwebs shone the dew,
And thick the wayside clovers grew;

The feeding bee had much to do,
So fast did honey-drops exude:

She sucked and murmured, and was
gone,
And lit on other blooms anon,
The while I learned a lesson on
The source and sense of quietude.

For sheep-bells chiming from a wold,
Or bleat of lamb within its fold,
Or cooing of love-legends old

To dove-wives make not quiet less;
Ecstatic chirp of winged thing,
Or bubbling of the water-spring,
Are sounds that more than silence
bring
Itself and its delightsomeness.

While thus I went to gladness fain,
I had but walked a mile or twain
Before my heart woke up again,
As dreaming she had slept too late;
The morning freshness that she viewed
With her own meanings she endued,
And touched with her solicitude
The natures she did meditate.

"If quiet is, for it I wait;
To it, ah! let me wed my fate,
And, like a sad wife, supplicate
My roving lord no more to flee;
If leisure is — but, ah! 'tis not —
'Tis long past praying for, God wot.
The fashion of it men forgot,
About the age of chivalry.

"Sweet is the leisure of the bird;
She craves no time for work deferred;
Her wings are not to aching stirred
Providing for her helpless ones.
Fair is the leisure of the wheat;
All night the damps about it fleet;
All day it basketh in the heat,
And grows, and whispers orisons.

"Grand is the leisure of the earth;
She gives her happy myriads birth,
And after harvest fears not dearth,
But goes to sleep in snow-wreaths
dim.

Dread is the leisure up above
The while He sits whose name is Love,
And waits, as Noah did, for the dove,
To wit if she would fly to him.

"He waits for us, while, houseless
things,
We beat about with bruised wings
On the dark floods and water-springs,
The ruined world, the desolate sea;
With open windows from the prime
All night, all day, He waits sublime,
Until the fulness of the time
Decreed from His eternity.

"Where is OUR leisure? — Give us rest.
Where is the quiet we possessed?
We must have had it once — were blest
With peace whose phantoms yet
entice.

Sorely the mother of mankind
Longed for the garden left behind;
For we still prove some yearnings
blind
Inherited from Paradise."

"Hold, heart!" I cried; "for trouble
sleeps;

I hear no sound of aught that weeps;
I will not look into thy deeps —
I am afraid, I am afraid!"

"Afraid!" she saith; "and yet 'tis
true
That what man dreads he still should
view —

Should do the thing he fears to do,
And storm the ghosts in ambushade."

"What good?" I sigh. "Was rea-
son meant

To straighten branches that are bent,
Or soothe an ancient discontent,
The instinct of a race dethroned?
Ah! doubly should that instinct go
Must the four rivers cease to flow,
Nor yield those rumors sweet and low
Wherewith man's life is undertoned."

"Yet had I but the past," she cries,
"And it was lost, I would arise
And comfort me some other wise.
But more than loss about me clings:
I am but restless with my race;
The whispers from a heavenly place,
Once dropped among us, seem to chase
Rest with their prophet-visittings.

"The race is like a child, as yet
Too young for all things to be set
Plainly before him with no let

Or hindrance meet for his degree ;
But ne'ertheless by much too old
Not to perceive that men withhold
More of the story than is told,
And so infer a mystery.

"If the Celestials daily fly
With messages on missions high,
And float, our masts and turrets nigh,
Conversing on Heaven's great in-
tents ;
What wonder hints of coming things,
Whereto man's hope and yearning
clings,
Should drop like feathers from their
wings
And give us vague presentiments ?

"And as the waxing moon can take
The tidal waters in her wake
And lead them round and round to
break

Obedient to her drawings dim ;
So may the movements of his mind,
The first Great Father of mankind,
Affect with answering movements blind,
And draw the souls that breathe by
Him.

"We had a message long ago
That like a river peace should flow,
And Eden bloom again below.

We heard, and we began to wait :
Full soon that message men forgot ;
Yet waiting is their destined lot,
And waiting for they know not what
They strive with yearnings passion-
ate.

"Regret and faith alike enchain ;
There was a loss, there comes a gain ;
We stand at fault betwixt the twain,
And that is veiled for which we pant.
Our lives are short, our ten times seven ;
We think the councils held in heaven
Sit long, ere yet that blissful leaven
Work peace amongst the militant.

"Then we blame God that sin should
be :
Adam began it at the tree,
'The woman whom THOU gavest me ;'
And we adopt his dark device.
O long Thou tarriest ! come and reign,

And bring forgiveness in Thy train,
And give us in our hands again
The apples of Thy Paradise."

"Far-seeing heart ! if that be all,
The happy things that did not fall,"
I sighed, "from every coppice call
They never from that garden went.
Behold their joy, so comfort thee,
Behold the blossom and the bee,
For they are yet as good and free
As when poor Eve was innocent.

"But reason thus : 'If we sank low,
If the lost garden we forego,
Each in his day, nor ever know
But in our poet souls its fate ;
Yet we may rise until we reach
A height untold of in its speech—
A lesson that it could not teach
Learn in this darker dwelling-place.'

"And reason on : 'We take the spoil ;
Loss made us poets, and the soil
Taught us great patience in our toil,
And life is kin to God through death.
Christ were not One with us but so,
And if bereft of Him we go ;
Dearer the heavenly mansions grow,
His home, to man that wandereth.'

"Content thee so, and ease thy smart,"
With that she slept again, my heart,
And I admired and took my part
With crowds of happy things the
while :
With open velvet butterflies
That swung and spread their peacock
eyes,
As if they cared no more to rise
From off their beds of canomile.

The blackcaps in an orchard met,
Praising the berries while they ate :
The finch that flew her beak to whet
Before she joined them on the tree ;
The water mouse among the reeds—
His bright eyes glancing black as beads,
So happy with a bunch of seeds—
I felt their gladness heartily.

But I came on, I smelt the hay,
And up the hills I took my way,
And down them still made holiday,

And walked, and wearied not a whit;
But ever with the lane I went
Until it dropped with steep descent,
Cut deep into the rock, a tent
Of maple branches roofing it.

Adown the rock small runlets wept,
And reckless ivies leaned and crept,
And little spots of sunshine slept

On its brown steeps and made them
fair;

And broader beams athwart it shot,
Where martins cheeped in many a
knot,

For they had ta'en a sandy plot
And scooped another Petra there.

And deeper down, hemmed in and hid
From upper light and life amid
The swallows gossiping, I thrid

Its mazes, till the dipping land
Sank to the level of my lane:

That was the last hill of the chain,
And fair below I saw the plain

That seemed cold cheer to reprimand.

Half-drowned in sleepy peace it lay,
As satiate with the boundless play
Of sunshine on its green array.

And clear-cut hills of gloomy blue
To keep it safe rose up behind,
As with a charmed ring to bind
The grassy sea, where clouds might
find

A place to bring their shadows to.

I said, and blest that pastoral grace,
"How sweet thou art, thou sunny
place!

Thy God approves thy smiling face:"

But straight my heart put in her
word;

She said, "Albeit thy face I bless,
There have been times, sweet wilder-
ness,

When I have wished to love thee less,
Such pangs thy smile administered."

But, lo! I reached a field of wheat,
And by its gate full clear and sweet
A workman sang, while at his feet

Played a young child, all life and
stir—

A three years' child, with rosy lip,
Who in the song had partnership,
Made happy with each falling chip
Dropped by the busy carpenter.

This, reared a new gate for the old,
And loud the tuneful measure rolled,
But stopped as I came up to hold

Some kindly talk of passing things.
Brave were his eyes, and frank his
mien;

Of all men's faces, calm or keen,
A better I have never seen
In all my lonely wanderings.

And how it was I scarce can tell,
We seemed to please each other well;
I lingered till a noonday bell

Had sounded, and his task was done.
An oak had screened us from the heat;
And 'neath it in the standing wheat,
A cradle and a fair retreat,

Full sweetly slept the little one.

The workman rested from his stroke,
And manly were the words he spoke,
Until the smiling babe awoke

And prayed to him for milk and food.
Then to a runlet forth he went,
And brought a wallet from the bent,
And bade me to the meal, intent

I should not quit his neighborhood.

"For here," said he, "are bread and
beer,

And meat enough to make good cheer;
Sir, eat with me, and have no fear,

For none upon my work depend,
Saving this child; and I may say
That I am rich, for every day

I put by somewhat; therefore stay,
And to such eating condescend."

We ate. The child—child fair to
see—

Began to cling about his knee,
And he down leaning fatherly

Received some softly-prattled prayer;

He smiled as if to list were balm,
And with his labor-hardened palm
Pushed from the baby-forehead calm

Those shining locks that clustered
there.

The rosy mouth made fresh essay —
 "O would he sing or would he play?"
 I looked, my thought would make its way —

"Fair is your child of face and limb,
 The round blue eyes full sweetly shine."

He answered me with glance benign —
 "Ay, Sir; but he is none of mine,
 Although I set great store by him."

With that, as if his heart was fain
 To open — nathless not complain —
 He let my quiet questions gain

His story: "Not of kin to me,"
 Repeating; "but asleep, awake,
 For worse, for better, him I take,
 To cherish for my dead wife's sake,
 And count him as her legacy."

"I married with the sweetest lass
 That ever stepped on meadow grass;
 That ever at her looking-glass
 Some pleasure took, some natural care;

That ever swept a cottage floor
 And worked all day, nor e'er gave o'er
 Till eve, then watched beside the door
 Till her good man should meet her there.

"But I lost all in its fresh prime;
 My wife fell ill before her time —
 Just as the bells began to chime
 One Sunday morn. By next day's light

Her little babe was born and dead,
 And she, unconscious what she said,
 With feeble hands about her spread,
 Sought it with yearnings infinite.

"With mother-longing still beguiled,
 And lost in fever-fancies wild,
 She piteously bemoaned her child
 That we had stolen, she said, away.
 And ten sad days she sighed to me,
 'I cannot rest until I see
 My pretty one! I think that he
 Smiled in my face but yesterday.'

"Then she would change, and faintly try
 To sing some tender lullaby;
 And 'Ah!' would moan, 'if I should die,

Who, sweetest babe, would cherish thee?"

Then weep, 'My pretty boy is grown;
 With tender feet on the cold stone
 He stands, for he can stand alone,
 And no one leads him motherly.'

"Then she with dying movements slow
 Would seem to knit, or seem to sew:
 'His feet are bare, he must not go
 Unshod:' and as her death drew on,
 'O little baby,' she would sigh;
 'My little child, I cannot die
 Till I have you to slumber nigh —
 You, you to set mine eyes upon.'

"When she spake thus, and moaning lay,
 They said, 'She cannot pass away,
 So sore she longs:' and as the day
 Broke on the hills, I left her side.
 Mourning along this lane I went:
 Some travelling folk had pitched their tent

Up yonder: there a woman, bent
 With age, sat meanly canopied.

"A twelvemonths' child was at her side:
 'Whose infant may that be?' I cried.
 'His that will own him,' she replied;
 'His mother's dead, no worse could be.'

'Since you can give—or else I erred—
 See, you are taken at your word,'
 Quoth I; 'That child is mine; I heard,
 And own him! Rise, and give him me.'

"She rose amazed, but cursed me too;
 She could not hold such luck for true,
 But gave him soon, with small ado.

I laid him by my Lucy's side:
 Close to her face that baby crept,
 And stroked it, and the sweet soul wept;
 Then, while upon her arm he slept,
 She passed, for she was satisfied.

"I loved her well, I wept her sore,
 And when her funeral left my door
 I thought that I should never more
 Feel any pleasure near me glow;

But I have learned, though this I had,
'Tis sometimes natural to be glad,
And no man can be always sad
Unless he wills to have it so.

"Oh, I had heavy nights at first,
And daily wakening was the worst :
For then my grief arose, and burst
Like something fresh upon my head ;
Yet when less keen it seemed to grow,
I was not pleased — I wished to go
Mourning adown this vale of woe,
For all my life uncomforted.

"I grudged myself the lightsome air,
That makes man cheerful unaware ;
When comfort came, I did not care
To take it in, to feel it stir :
And yet God took with me His plan,
And now for my appointed span
I think I am a happier man
For having wed and wept for her.

"Because no natural tie remains,
On this small thing I spend my gains ;
God makes me love him for my pains,
And binds me so to wholesome care :
I would not lose from my past life
That happy year, that happy year !
Yet now I wage no useless strife
With feelings blithe and debonair.

"I have the courage to be gay,
Although she lieth lapped away
Under the daisies, for I say,
'Thou wouldst be glad if thou couldst
see :'
My constant thought makes manifest
I have not what I love the best,
But I must thank God for the rest
While I hold heaven a verity."

He rose, upon his shoulder set
The child, and while with vague regret
We parted, pleased that we had met,
My heart did with herself confer ;
With wholesome shame she did repent
Her reasonings idly eloquent,
And said, "I might be more content :
But God go with the carpenter."

THE STAR'S MONUMENT.

IN THE CONCLUDING PART OF A DIS-
COURSE ON FAME.

[*He thinks.*]

IF there be memory in the world to
come,
If thought recur to SOME THINGS si-
lenced here,
Then shall the deep heart be no longer
dumb,
But find expression in that happier
sphere ;
It shall not be denied their utmost sum
Of love, to speak without or fault or
fear,
But utter to the harp with changes
sweet
Words that, forbidden still, then heaven
were incomplete.

[*He speaks.*]

Now let us talk about the ancient days,
And things which happened long be-
fore our birth :
It is a pity to lament that praise
Should be no shadow in the train of
worth.
What is it, Madam, that your heart
dismays ?
Why murmur at the course of this vast
earth ?
Think rather of the work than of the
praise ;
Come, we will talk about the ancient
days.
There was a Poet, Madam, once (said
he) ;
I will relate his story to you now,
While through the branches of this
apple-tree
Some spots of sunshine flicker on
your brow ;
While every flower hath on its breast a
bee,
And every bird in stirring doth en-
dow
The grass with falling blooms that
smoothly glide,
As ships drop down a river with the
tide.

For telling of his tale no fitter place
Than this old orchard, sloping to the
west ;

Through its pink dome of blossom I
can trace

Some overlying azure ; for the rest,
These flowery branches round us in-
terlace ;

The ground is hollowed like a mossy
nest :

Who talks of fame while the religious
spring

Offers the incense of her blossoming ?

There was a Poet, Madam, once (said
he),

Who, while he walked at sundown
in a lane,

Took to his heart the hope that destiny
Had singled him this guerdon to
obtain,

That by the power of his sweet min-
strelsy

Some hearts for truth and goodness
he should gain,

And charm some grovellers to uplift
their eyes

And suddenly wax conscious of the
skies.

"Master, good e'en to ye!" a wood-
man said,

Who the low hedge was trimming
with his shears.

"This hour is fine" — the Poet bowed
his head.

"More fine," he thought, "O friend!
to me appears

The sunset than to you; finer the
spread

Of orange lustre through these azure
spheres,

Where little clouds lie still, like flocks
of sheep,

Or vessels sailing in God's other deep.

"O finer far! What work so high as
mine,

Interpreter betwixt the world and
man,

Nature's ungathered pearls to set and
shrine,

The mystere she wraps her in to
scan ;

Her unsyllabic voices to combine,
And serve her with such love as
poets can ;

With mortal words, her chant of praise
to bind,

Then die, and leave the poem to man-
kind?

"O fair, O fine, O lot to be desired!

Early and late my heart appeals to me,
And says, 'O work, O will — Thou
man, be fired

To earn this lot,' — she says, 'I
would not be

A worker for mine own bread, or one
hired

For mine own profit. O, I would be
free

To work for others; love so earned of
them

Should be my wages and my diadem.

"Then when I died I should not fall,"
says she,

'Like dropping flowers that no man
noticeth,

But like a great branch of some stately
tree

Rent in a tempest, and flung down
to death,

Thick with green leafage — so that
piteously

Each passer by that ruin shuddereth,
And saith, The gap this branch hath

left is wide ;

The loss thereof can never be sup-
plied."

But, Madam, while the Poet pondered
so,

Toward the leafy hedge he turned
his eye,

And saw two slender branches that did
grow,

And from it rising spring and flourish
high :

Their tops were twined together fast,
and, lo,

Their shadow crossed the path as he
went by —

The shadow of a wild rose and a briar,
And it was shaped in semblance like a
lyre.

In sooth, a lyre! and as the soft air
played,
Those branches stirred, but did not
disunite.

"O emblem meet for me!" the Poet
said;

"Ay, I accept and own thee for my
right;

The shadowy lyre across my feet is laid,
Distinct though frail, and clear with
crimson light:

Fast is it twined to bear the windy
strain,

And, supple, it will bend and rise
again.

"This lyre is cast across the dusty way,
The common path that common men
pursue;

I crave like blessing for my shadowy
lay,

Life's trodden paths with beauty to
renew,
And cheer the eve of many a toil-
stained day.

Light it, old sun, wet it, thou com-
mon dew,
That 'neath men's feet its image still
may be

While yet it waves above them, living
lyre, like thee!"

But even as the Poet spoke, behold
He lifted up his face toward the sky;
The ruddy sun dipt under the grey
wold,

His shadowy lyre was gone; and,
passing by,
The woodman lifting up his shears,
was bold

Their temper on those branches twain
to try,
And all their loveliness and leafage
sweet

Fell in the pathway, at the Poet's feet.

"Ah! my fair emblem that I chose,"
quoth he,

"That for myself I coveted but now,
Too soon, methinks, thou hast been
false to me;

The lyre from pathway fades, the
light from brow."

Then straightway turned he from it
hastily,

As dream that waking sense will dis-
allow;

And while the highway heavenward
paled apace,

He went on westward to his dwelling-
place.

He went on steadily, while far and fast
The summer darkness dropped upon
the world,

A gentle air among the cloudlets passed
And fanned away their crimson; then
it curled

The yellow poppies in the field, and
cast

A dimness on the grasses, for it
furled

Their daisies, and swept out the purple
stain

That eve had left upon the pastoral
plain.

He reached his city. Lo! the dark-
ened street

Where he abode was full of gazing
crowds;

He heard the muffled tread of many
feet;

A multitude stood gazing at the
clouds.

"What mark ye there," said he, "and
wherefore meet?"

Only a passing mist the heaven o'er-
shrouds;

It breaks, it parts, it drifts like scattered
spars—

What lies behind it but the nightly
stars?"

Then did the gazing crowd to him
aver

They sought a lamp in heaven whose
light was hid;

For that in sooth an old Astronomer
Down from his roof had rushed into
their mid,

Frighted, and fain with others to con-
fer,

That he had cried, "O sirs!"—and
upward bid

Them gaze — "O sirs, a light is quenched
afar;
Look up, my masters, we have lost a
star!"

The people pointed, and the Poet's eyes
Flew upward, where a gleaming sisterhood

Swam in the dewy heaven. The very
skies

Were mutable; for all-amazed he
stood

To see that truly not in any wise
He could behold them as of old, nor
could

His eyes receive the whole whereof he
wot,

But when he told them over, one WAS
NOT.

While yet he gazed and pondered reverently,

The fickle folk began to move
away.

"It is but one star less for us to
see;

And what does one star signify?" quoth
they;

"The heavens are full of them." "But,
ah!" said he,

"That star was bright while yet she
lasted." "Ay!"

They answered: "praise her, Poet, an'
ye will:

Some are now shining that are brighter
still."

"Poor star! to be disparaged so soon
On her withdrawal," thus the Poet
sighed;

"That men should miss, and straight
deny her noon

Its brightness!" But the people in
their pride

Said, "How are we beholden? 'twas no
boon

She gave. Her nature 'twas to shine
so wide:

She could not choose but shine, nor
could we know

Such star had ever dwelt in heaven but
so."

The Poet answered sadly, "That is
true!"

And then he thought upon unthank-
fulness;

While some went homeward; and the
residue,

Reflecting that the stars are number-
less,

Mourned that man's daylight hours
should be so few,

So short the shining that his path
may bless:

To nearer themes then tuned their
willing lips,

And thought no more upon the star's
eclipse.

But he, the Poet, could not rest content
Till he had found that old Astrono-
mer;

Therefore at midnight to his house
he went

And prayed him be his tale's inter-
preter.

And yet upon the heaven his eyes he
bent,

Hearing the marvel; yet he sought
for her

That was awaiting, in the hope her face
Once more might fill its reft abiding-
place.

Then said the old Astronomer: "My
son,

I sat alone upon my roof to-night;
I saw the stars come forth, and scarcely

shun
To fringe the edges of the western

light;
I marked those ancient clusters one by

one,
The same that blessed our old fore-
father's sight:

For God alone is older — none but He
Can charge the stars with mutability:

"The elders of the night, the stead-
fast stars,

The old, old stars which God has let
us see,

That they might be our soul's auxiliars,
And help us to the truth how young

we be —

God's youngest, latest born, as if, some
 spars
 And a little clay being over of them
 — He
 Had made our world and us thereof,
 yet given,
 To humble us, the sight of His great
 heaven.

"But ah! my son, to-night mine eyes
 have seen
 The death of light, the end of old
 renown;
 A shrinking back of glory that had been,
 A dread eclipse before the Eternal's
 frown.
 How soon a little grass will grow be-
 tween
 These eyes and those appointed to
 'look down
 Upon a world that was not made on
 high
 Till the last scenes of their long em-
 piry!

"To-night that shining cluster now de-
 spoiled
 Lay in day's wake a perfect sister-
 hood;
 Sweet was its light to me that long had
 toiled,
 It gleamed and trembled o'er the
 distant wood;
 Blown in a pile the clouds from it re-
 coiled,
 Cool twilight up the sky her way
 made good;
 I saw, but not believed—it was so
 strange—
 That one of those same stars had suf-
 fered change.

"The darkness gathered, and me-
 thought she spread,
 Wrapped in a reddish haze that
 waxed and waned;
 But notwithstanding to myself I said—
 'The stars are changeless; sure some
 mote hath stained
 Mine eyes, and her fair glory min-
 ished.'
 Of age and failing vision I com-
 plained,

And thought 'some vapor in the heav-
 ens doth swim,
 That makes her look so large and yet
 so dim.'

"But I gazed round, and all her lus-
 trous peers
 In her red presence showed but wan
 and white;
 For like a living coal beheld through
 tears
 She glowed and quivered with a
 gloomy light:
 Methought she trembled, as all sick
 through fears,
 Helpless, appalled, appealing to the
 night;
 Like one who throws his arms up to
 the sky
 And bows down suffering, hopeless of
 reply.

"At length, as if an everlasting Hand
 Had taken hold upon her in her
 place,
 And swiftly, like a golden grain of
 sand,
 Through all the deep infinitudes of
 space
 Was drawing her—God's truth as
 here I stand—
 Backward and inward to itself; her
 face
 Fast lessened, lessened, till it looked
 no more
 Than smallest atom on a boundless
 shore.

And she that was so fair, I saw her lie.
 The smallest thing in God's great
 firmament,
 Till night was at the darkest, and on
 high
 Her sisters glittered, though her
 light was spent;
 I strained, to follow her, each aching
 eye,
 So swiftly at her Maker's will she
 went;
 I looked again—I looked—the star
 was gone,
 And nothing marked in heaven where
 she had shone."

"Gone!" said the Poet, "and about
to be
Forgotten: O, how sad a fate is
hers!"

"How is it sad, my son?" all rever-
ently

The old man answered; "though
she ministers

No longer with her lamp to me and
thee,

She has fulfilled her mission. God
transfers

Or dims her ray; yet was she blest as
bright,

For all her life was spent in giving
light."

"Her mission she fulfilled assuredly,"
The Poet cried: "but, O unhappy
star!

None praise and few will bear in memory
The name she went by. O, from far,
from far

Comes down, methinks, her mournful
voice to me,

Full of regrets that men so thankless
are."

So said, he told that old Astronomer
All that the gazing crowd had said of
her.

And he went on to speak in bitter wise,
As one who seems to tell another's
fate,

But feels that nearer meaning underlies,
And points its sadness to his own es-
tate:

"If such be the reward," he said with
sighs,

"Envy to earn for love, for goodness
hate—

If such be thy reward, hard case is
thine!

It had been better for thee not to shine.

"If to reflect a light that is divine
Makes that which doth reflect it bet-
ter seen,

And if to see is to condemn the shrine,
'Twere surely better it had never
been:

It had been better for her NOT TO
SHINE,

And for me NOT TO SING. Better, I
ween,

For us to yield no more that radiance
bright,

For them, to lack the light than scorn
the light."

Strange words were those from Poet
lips (said he);

And then he paused, and sighed, and
turned to look

Upon the lady's downcast eyes, and see
How fast the honey bees in settling
shook

Those apple blossoms on her from the
tree;

He watched her busy fingers as they
took

And slipped the knotted thread, and
thought how much

He would have given that hand to hold
—to touch.

At length, as suddenly become aware
Of this long pause, she lifted up her
face,

And he withdrew his eyes—she looked
so fair

And cold, he thought, in her uncon-
scious grace.

"Ah! little dreams she of the restless
care,"

He thought, "that makes my heart
to throb apace:

Though we this morning part, the
knowledge sends

No thrill to her calm pulse—we are
but FRIENDS."

Ah! turret clock (he thought), I would
thy hand

Were hid behind yon towering maple-
trees!

Ah! tell-tale shadow, but one moment
stand—

Dark shadow—fast advancing to my
knees;

Ah! foolish heart (he thought), that
vainly planned

By feigning gladness to arrive at ease;
Ah! painful hour, yet pain to think it
ends;

I must remember that we are but
friends.

And while the knotted thread moved
to and fro,

In sweet regretful tones that lady said:
"It seemeth that the fame you would
forego

The Poet whom you tell of coveted;
But I would fain, methinks, his story
know.

And was he loved?" said she, "or
was he wed?

And had he friends?" "One friend,
perhaps," said he;

"But for the rest, I pray you let it be."

Ah! little bird (he thought), most pa-
tient bird,

Breasting thy speckled eggs the long
day through,

By so much as my reason is preferred
Above thine instinct, I my work
would do

Better than thou dost thine. Thou
hast not stirred

This hour thy wing. Ah! russet
bird, I sue

For a like patience to wear through
these hours—

Bird on thy nest among the apple-
flowers.

I will not speak—I will not speak to
thee,

My star! and soon to be my lost, lost
star.

The sweetest, first, that ever shone on
me,

So high above me and beyond so far;
I can forego thee, but not bear to see

My love, like rising mist, thy lustre
mar:

That were a base return for thy sweet
light.

Shine, though I never more shall see
that thou art bright.

Never! 'Tis certain that no hope is—
none!

No hope for me, and yet for thee no
fear.

The hardest part of my hard task is
done;

Thy calm assures me that I am not
dear;

Though far and fast the rapid moments
run,

Thy bosom heaveth not, thine eyes
are clear;

Silent, perhaps a little sad at heart -
She is. I am her friend, and I depart.

Silent she had been, but she raised her
face;

"And will you end," said she, "this
half-told tale?"

"Yes, it were best," he answered her.
"The place

Where I left off was where he felt to
fail

His courage, Madam, through the fancy
base

That they who love, endure, or work,
may rail

And cease—if all their love, the works
they wrought,

And their endurance, men have set at
nought."

'It had been better for me NOT to sing,"

My Poet said, "and for her NOT to
shine;"

But him the old man answered, sorrow-
ing,

"My son, did God who made her,
the Divine

Lighter of suns, when down to yon
bright ring

He cast her, like some gleaming al-
mandine,

And set her in her place, begirt with
rays,

Say unto her 'Give light,' or say
'Earn praise?'"

The Poet said, "He made her to give
light."

"My son," the old man answered,
"blest are such,

A blessed lot is theirs; but if each night
Mankind had praised her radiance—

inasmuch

As praise had never made it wax more
bright,

And cannot now rekindle with its
touch

Her lost effulgence, it is nought. I wot
That praise was not her blessing nor
her lot."

"Ay," said the Poet, "I my words
abjure,
And I repent me that I uttered them;
But by her light and by its forfeiture
She shall not pass without her re-
quiem.

Though my name perish, yet shall hers
endure;
Though I should be forgotten, she,
lost gem,
Shall be remembered; though she
sought not fame,
It shall be busy with her beauteous
name.

"For I will raise in her bright memory,
Lost now on earth, a lasting monu-
ment,
And graven on it shall recorded be
That all her rays to light mankind
were spent;
And I will sing albeit none heedeth me,
On her exemplar being still intent:
While in men's sight shall stand the
record thus —
'So long as she did last she lighted
us.'"

So said, he raised, according to his
vow,
On the green grass, where oft his
townsfolk met,
Under the shadow of a leafy bough
That leaned toward a singing rivulet,
One pure white stone, whereon, like
crown on brow,
The image of the vanished star was
set;
And this was graven on the pure white
stone
In golden letters — "WHILE SHE LIVED
SHE SHONE."

Madam, I cannot give this story well —
My heart is beating to another chime;
My voice must needs a different cadence
swell;
It is yon singing bird, which all the
time
Wooeth his nested mate, that doth dis-
pel
My thoughts. What, deem you, could
a lover's rhyme

The sweetness of that passionate lay
excel?
O soft, O low her voice — "I cannot
tell."

[*He thinks.*]

The old man — ay, he spoke, he was
not hard;
"She was his joy," he said, "his
comforter,
But he would trust me. I was not de-
barred
Whate'er my heart approved to say
to her."
Approved! O torn and tempted and
ill-starred
And breaking heart, approve not nor
demur;
It is the serpent that beguileth thee
With "God doth know" beneath this
apple-tree.

Yea, God DOTH know, and only God
doth know.
Have pity, God, my spirit groans to
Thee!
I bear Thy curse primeval, and I go;
But heavier than on Adam falls on me
My tillage of the wilderness; for, lo!
I leave behind the woman, and I see
As 'twere the gates of Eden closing
o'er
To hide her from my sight for evermore.

[*He speaks.*]

I am a fool, with sudden start he cried,
To let the song-bird work me such
unrest:
If I break off again, I pray you chide,
For inorning fleeteth, with my tale at
best
Half told. That white stone, Madam,
gleamed beside
The little rivulet, and all men pressed
To read the lost one's story traced
thereon,
The golden legend — "While she lived
she shone."

And, Madam, when the Poet heard
them read,
And children spell the letters softly
through,

It may be that he felt at heart some
 need,
 Some craving to be thus remembered
 too ;
 It may be that he wondered if indeed
 He must die wholly when he passed
 from view ;
 It may be, wished, when death his eyes
 made dim,
 That some kind hand would raise such
 stone for him.

But shortly, as there comes to most of
 us,
 There came to him the need to quit
 his home :
 To tell you why were simply hazardous.
 What said I, Madam?—men were
 made to roam
 My meaning is. It hath been always
 thus :
 They are athirst for mountains and
 sea foam ;
 Heirs of this world, what wonder if
 perchance
 They long to see their grand inheri-
 tance?

He left his city, and went forth to teach
 Mankind, his peers, the hidden har-
 mony
 That underlies God's discords, and to
 reach
 And touch the master-string that like
 a sigh
 Thrills in their souls, as if it would
 beseech
 Some hand to sound it, and to sat-
 isfy
 Its yearning for expression : but no
 word
 Till poet touch it hath to make its mu-
 sic heard.

[*He thinks.*]

I know that God is good, though evil
 dwells
 Among us, and doth all things holi-
 est share ;
 That there is joy in heaven, while yet
 our knells
 Sound for the souls which He has
 summoned there ;

That painful love unsatisfied hath
 spells
 Earned by its smart to soothe its fel-
 low's care :
 But yet this atom cannot in the
 whole
 Forget itself—it aches a separate soul.

[*He speaks.*]

But, Madam, to my Poet I return.
 With his sweet cadences of woven
 words
 He made their rude untutored hearts
 to burn
 And melt like gold refined. No
 brooding birds
 Sing better of the love that doth so-
 journ
 Hid in the nest of home, which softly
 girds
 The beating heart of life ; and, strait
 though it be,
 Is straitness better than wide liberty.

He taught them, and they learned, but
 not the less
 Remained unconscious whence that
 lore they drew,
 But dreamed that of their native noble-
 ness
 Some lofty thoughts, that he had
 planted, grew ;
 His glorious maxims in a lowly
 dress,
 Like seed sown broadcast, sprung in
 all men's view.
 The sower, passing onward, was not
 known,
 And all men reaped the harvest as
 their own.

It may be, Madam, that those ballads
 sweet,
 Whose rhythmic measures yesterday
 we sung,
 Which time and changes make not ob-
 solete,
 But (as a river bears down blossoms
 flung
 Upon its breast) take with them while
 they fleet—
 It may be from his lyre that first
 they sprung :

But who can tell, since work surviveth
fame? —
The rhyme is left, but lost the Poet's
name.

He worked, and bravely he fulfilled
his trust —

So long he wandered sowing worthy
seed,
Watering of wayside buds that were
adust,

And touching for the common ear
his reed —

So long to wear away the cankering
rust

That dulls the gold of life — so long
to plead

With sweetest music for all souls op-
pressed,

That he was old ere he had thought of
rest.

Old and grey-headed, leaning on a
staff,

To that great city of his birth he
came,

And at its gates he paused with won-
dering laugh

To think how changed were all his
thoughts of fame

Since first he carved the golden epi-
taph

To keep in memory a worthy name,
And thought forgetfulness had been its
doom

But for a few bright letters on a tomb.

The old Astronomer had long since
died;

The friends of youth were gone and
far dispersed;

Strange were the domes that rose on
every side;

Strange fountains on his wondering
vision burst;

The men of yesterday their business
plied;

No face was left that he had known
at first;

And in the city gardens, lo! he
sees

The saplings that he set are stately
trees.

Upon the grass beneath their welcome
shade,

Behold! he marks the fair white
monument,

And on its face the golden words dis-
played,

For sixty years their lustre have not
spent;

He sitteth by it and is not afraid,
But in its shadow he is well con-
tent;

And envies not, though bright their
gleamings are,

The golden letters of the vanished star.

He gazeth up; exceeding bright ap-
pears

That golden legend to his aged eyes,
For they are dazzled till they fill with
tears,

And his lost Youth doth like a vision
rise;

She saith to him, "In all these toil-
some years,

What hast thou won by work or en-
terprise?

What hast thou won to make amends
to thee,

As thou didst swear to do, for loss of
me?

"O man! O white-haired man!" the
vision said,

"Since we two sat beside this monu-
ment

Life's clearest hues are all evanished,
The golden wealth thou hadst of me

is spent;

The wind hath swept thy flowers, their
leaves are shed;

The music is played out that with
thee went."

"Peace, peace!" he cried; "I lost
thee, but, in truth,

There are worse losses than the loss of
youth."

He said not what those losses were —
but I —

But I must leave them, for the time
draws near.

Some lose not ONLY joy, but memory
Of how it felt: not love that was so
dear

Lose only, but the steadfast certainty
 That once they had it; doubt comes
 on, then fear,
 And after that despondency. I wis
 The Poet must have meant such loss as
 this.

But while he sat and pondered on his
 youth,

He said, "It did one deed that doth
 remain,

For it preserved the memory and the
 truth

Of her that now doth neither set nor
 wane,

But shine in all men's thoughts; nor
 sink forsooth,

And be forgotten like the summer rain.
 O, it is good that man should not forget
 Or benefits foregone or brightness set!"

He spoke and said, "My lot contenteth
 me;

I am right glad for this her worthy
 fame;

That which was good and great I fain
 would see

Drawn with a halo round what rests
 — its name."

This while the Poet said, behold, there
 came

A workman with his tools anear the
 tree,

And when he read the words he paused
 awhile

And pondered on them with a wonder-
 ing smile.

And then he said, "I pray you, Sir,
 what mean

The golden letters of this monu-
 ment?"

In wonder quoth the Poet, "Hast thou
 been

A dweller near at hand, and their
 intent

Hast neither heard by voice of fame,
 nor seen

The marble earlier?" "Ay," said
 he, and leant

Upon his spade to hear the tale, then
 sigh,

And say it was a marvel, and pass by.

Then said the Poet, "This is strange
 to me."

But as he mused, with trouble in his
 mind,

A band of maids approached him
 leisurely,

Like vessels sailing with a favoring
 wind;

And of their rosy lips requested he,
 As one that for a doubt would solving
 find,

The tale, if tale there were, of that
 white stone,

And those fair letters— "While she
 lived she shone."

Then like a fleet that floats becalmed
 they stay.

"O, Sir," saith one, "this monu-
 ment is old;

But we have heard our virtuous mothers
 say

That by their mothers thus the tale
 was told:

A Poet made it; journeying then away,
 He left us; and though some the
 meaning hold

For other than the ancient one, yet we
 Receive this legend for a certainty:—

"There was a lily once, most purely
 white,

Beneath the shadow of these boughs
 it grew;

Its starry blossom it unclosed by night,
 And a young Poet loved its shape
 and hue.

He watched it nightly, 'twas so fair a
 sight,

Until a stormy wind arose and blew,
 And when he came once more his
 flower to greet

Its fallen petals drifted to his feet.

"And for his beautiful white lily's sake,
 That she might be remembered
 where her scent

Had been right sweet, he said that he
 would make

In her dear memory a monument:
 For she was purer than a driven flake

Of snow, and in her grace most ex-
 cellent;

The loveliest life that death did ever
mar,
As beautiful to gaze on as a star."

"I thank you, maid," the Poet answered her,

"And I am glad that I have heard
your tale."

With that they passed; and as an
inlander,

Having heard breakers raging in a
gale

And falling down in thunder, will aver
That still, when far away in grassy
vale,

He seems to hear those seething waters
bound,

So in his ears the maiden's voice did
sound.

He leaned his face upon his hand, and
thought

And thought, until a youth came by
that way;

And once again of him the Poet sought
The story of the star. But, well-a-
day!

He said, "The meaning with much
doubt is fraught,

The sense thereof can no man surely
say;

For still tradition sways the common
ear,

That of a truth a star DID DISAPPEAR.

"But they who look beneath the outer
shell

That wraps the 'kernel of the peo-
ple's lore,'

Hold THAT for superstition; and they
tell

That seven lovely sisters dwelt of yore
In this old city, where it so befell

That one a Poet loved; that, further-
more,

As stars above us she was pure and
good,

And fairest of that beauteous sister-
hood.

"So beautiful they were, those virgins
seven,

That all men called them clustered
stars in song,

Forgetful that the stars abide in heaven:
But woman bideth not beneath it
long;

For O, alas! alas! one fated even,
When stars their azure deeps began
to throng,

That virgin's eyes of Poet loved waxed
dim,

And all their lustrous shining waned to
him.

"In summer dusk she drooped her
head and sighed

Until what time the evening star
went down,

And all the other stars did shining bide
Clear in the lustré of their old re-
nown,

And then—the virgin laid her down
and died:

Forgot her youth, forgot her beauty's
crown,

Forgot the sisters whom she loved
before,

And broke her Poet's heart for ever-
more."

"A mournful tale, in sooth," the lady
saith:

"But did he truly grieve for ever-
more?"

"It may be you forget," he answereth,
"That this is but a fable at the core

O' the other fable." "Though it be
but breath,"

She asketh, "was it true?" Then
he, "This lore,

Since it is fable, either way may go;
Then, if it please you, think it might
be so."

"Nay, but," she saith, "if I had told
your tale,

The virgin should have lived his
home to bless,

Or, must she die, I would have made
to fail

His useless love." "I tell you not
the less,"

He sighs, "because it was of no avail:
His heart the Poet would not dis-
possess

Thereof. But let us leave the fable now,
My Poet heard it with an aching brow."

And he made answer thus: "I thank thee, youth;

Strange is thy story to these aged ears,
But I bethink me thou hast told a truth

Under the guise of fable. If my tears,
Thou lost beloved star, lost now, forsooth,

Indeed could bring thee back among thy peers,

So new thou shouldst be deemed as newly seen,

For men forget that thou hast ever been.

"There was a morning when I longed for fame,

There was a noontide when I passed it by,

There is an evening when I think not shame

Its substance and its being to deny;
For if men bear in mind great deeds, the name

Of him that wrought them shall they leave to die;

Or if his name they shall have deathless writ,

They change the deeds that first ennobled it.

"O golden letters of this monument!

O words to celebrate a loved renown
Lost now or wrested, and to fancies lent,

Or on a fabled forehead set for crown!

For my departed star, I am content,
Though legends dim and years her memory drown:

For what were fame to her, compared and set

By this great truth which ye make lustrous yet?"

"Adieu!" the Poet said, "my vanished star,

Thy duty and thy happiness were one.

Work is heaven's hest; its fame is sublunar:

The fame thou dost not need—the work is done.

For thee I am content that these things are;

More than content were I, my race being run,

Might it be true of me, though none thereon

Should muse regretful—"While he lived he shone."

So said, the Poet rose and went his way,

And that same lot he proved whereof he spake.

Madam, my story is told out; the day
Draws out her shadows, time doth overtake

The morning. That which endeth call a lay,

Sung after pause—a motto in the break

Between two chapters of a tale not new,
Nor joyful—but a common tale.
Adieu!

And that same God who made your face so fair,

And gave your woman's heart its tenderness,

So shield the blessing He implanted there,

That it may never turn to your distress,

And never cost you trouble or despair,
Nor, granted, leave the granter comfortless;

But like a river, blest where'er it flows,
Be still receiving while it still bestows.

Adieu, he said, and paused, while she sat mute

In the soft shadow of the apple-tree;
The skylark's song rang like a joyous flute,

The brook went prattling past her restlessly:

She let their tongues be her tongue's substitute;

It was the wind that sighed, it was not she:

And what the lark, the brook, the wind, had said,

We cannot tell, for none interpreted.

Their counsels might be hard to reconcile,

They might not suit the moment or the spot.

She rose, and laid her work aside the while

Down in the sunshine of that grassy plot ;

She looked upon him with an almost smile,

And held to him a hand that faltered not.

One moment—bird and brook went warbling on,

And the wind sighed again—and he was gone.

So quietly, as if she heard no more

Or skylark in the azure overhead,

Or water slipping past the cressy shore,

Or wind that rose in sighs, and sighing fled—

So quietly, until the alders hoar

Took him beneath them; till the downward spread

Of planes engulfed him in their leafy seas

She stood beneath her rose-flushed apple-trees.

And then she stooped toward the mossy grass,

And gathered up her work and went her way ;

Straight to that ancient turret she did pass,

And startle back some fawns that were at play.

She did not sigh, she never said "Alas!"

Although he was her friend: but still that day,

Where elm and hornbeam spread a towering dome,

She crossed the dells to her ancestral home.

And did she love him?—what if she did not?

Then home was still the home of happiest years ;

Nor thought was exiled to partake his lot,

Nor heart lost courage through foreboding fears ;

Nor echo did against her secret plot,

Nor music her betray to painful tears ;

Nor life become a dream, and sunshine dim,

And riches poverty, because of him.

But did she love him?—what and if she did?

Love cannot cool the burning Austral sand,

Nor show the secret waters that lie hid

In arid valleys of that desert land.

Love has no spells can scorching winds forbid,

Or bring the help which tarries near to hand,

Or spread a cloud for curtaining faded eyes

That gaze up dying into alien skies.

A DEAD YEAR.

I took a year out of my life and story—

A dead year, and said, "I will hew thee a tomb!

'All the kings of the nations lie in glory ;'

Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom ;

Swathed in linen, and precious unguents old ;

Painted with cinnabar, and rich with gold.

"Silent they rest, in solemn salvatory,
Sealed from the moth and the owl and the flittermouse—

Each with his name on his brow.

'All the kings of the nations lie in glory,

Every one in his own house :'

'Then why not thou?

"Year," I said, "thou shalt not lack

Bribes to bar thy coming back ;

Doth old Egypt wear her best

In the chambers of her rest?

Doth she take to her last bed
 Beaten gold, and glorious red?
 Envy not! for thou wilt wear
 In the dark a shroud as fair;
 Golden with the sunny ray
 Thou withdrawest from my day;
 Wrought upon with colors fine
 Stolen from this life of mine:
 Like the dusty Libyan kings,
 Lie with two wide-open wings
 On thy breast, as if to say,
 On these wings hope flew away;
 And so housed, and thus adorned,
 Not forgotten, but not scorned,
 Let the dark for evermore
 Close thee when I close the door;
 And the dust for ages fall
 In the creases of thy pall;
 And no voice nor visit rude
 Break thy sealèd solitude."

I took the year out of my life and
 story,
 The dead year, and said, "I have
 hewed thee a tomb!

'All the kings of the nations lie in
 glory,'
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred
 gloom;
 But for the sword, and the sceptre, and
 diadem,

Sure thou didst reign like them."
 So I laid her with those tyrants old and
 hoary,

According to my vow;
 For I said, "The kings of the nations
 lie in glory,
 And so shalt thou!"

"Rock," I said, "thy ribs are strong,
 That I bring thee guard it long;
 Hide the light from buried eyes—
 Hide it, lest the dead arise."

"Year," I said, and turned away,
 "I am free of thee this day;
 All that we two only know,
 I forgive and I forego,
 So thy face no more I meet
 In the field or in the street."

Thus we parted, she and I;
 Life hid death, and put it by;
 Life hid death, and said, "Be free!
 I have no more need of thee."

No more need! O mad mistake,
 With repentance in its wake!
 Ignorant, and rash, and blind,
 Life had left the grave behind;
 But had locked within its hold,
 With the spices and the gold,
 All she had to keep her warm
 In the raging of the storm.

Scarce the sunset bloom was gone,
 And the little stars outshone,
 Ere the dead year, stiff and stark,
 Drew me to her in the dark;
 Death drew life to come to her,
 Beating at her sepulchre,
 Crying out, "How can I part
 With the best share of my heart?
 Lo, it lies upon the bier,
 Captive, with the buried year.
 O my heart!" And I fell prone,
 Weeping at the sealèd stone;
 "Year among the shades," I said,
 "Since I live, and thou art dead,
 Let my captive heart be free
 Like a bird to fly to me."
 And I stayed some voice to win,
 But none answered from within;
 And I kissed the door—and night
 Deepened till the stars waxed bright;
 And I saw them set and wane,
 And the world turned green again.

"So," I whispered, "open door,
 I must tread this palace floor—
 Sealèd palace, rich and dim.
 Let a narrow sunbeam swim
 After me, and on me spread
 While I look upon my dead;
 Let a little warmth be free
 To come after; let me see
 Through the doorway, when I sit
 Looking out, the swallows flit,
 Settling not till daylight goes;
 Let me smell the wild white rose,
 Smell the woodbine and the may;
 Mark, upon a sunny day,
 Sated from their blossoms rise
 Honey-bees and butterflies.
 Let me hear, O! let me hear,
 Sitting by my buried year,
 Finches chirping to their young,
 And the little noises flung
 Out of clefts where rabbits play,
 Or from falling water-spray;

And the gracious echoes woke
 By man's work : the woodman's stroke,
 Shout of shepherd, whistlings blithe,
 And the whetting of the scythe ;
 Let this be, lest, shut and furled
 From the well-beloved world,
 I forget her yearnings old,
 And her troubles manifold,
 Strivings sore, submissions meet,
 And my pulse no longer beat,
 Keeping time and bearing part
 With the pulse of her great heart.

"So! swing open, door, and shade
 Take me: I am not afraid,
 For the time will not be long ;
 Soon I shall have waxen strong —
 Strong enough my own to win
 From the grave it lies within."

And I entered. On her bier
 Quiet lay the buried year ;
 I sat down where I could see
 Life without and sunshine free,
 Death within. And I between,
 Waited my own heart to wean
 From the shroud that shaded her
 In the rock-hewn sepulchre —
 Waited till the dead should say,
 "Heart, be free of me this day" —
 Waited with a patient will —
 AND I WAIT BETWEEN THEM STILL.

I take the year back to my life and
 story,
 The dead year, and say, "I will share
 in thy tomb.

'All the kings of the nations lie in
 glory ;'
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred
 gloom!

They reigned in their lifetime with
 sceptre and diadem,

But thou excellest them ;
 For life doth make thy grave her ora-
 tory,

And the crown is still on thy brow ;
 'All the kings of the nations lie in
 glory,'

And so dost thou."

REFLECTIONS

*Written for the Portfolio Society,
 July, 1862.*

LOOKING OVER A GATE AT A POOL IN
 A FIELD.

WHAT change has made the pastures
 sweet

And reached the daisies at my feet,
 And cloud that wears a golden hem?
 This lovely world, the hills, the
 sward—

They all look fresh, as if our Lord
 But-yesterday had finished them.

And here's the field with light aglow ;
 How fresh its boundary lime-trees
 show,

And how its wet leaves trembling
 shine!

Between their trunks come through to
 me

The morning sparkles of the sea
 Below the level browsing line.

I see the pool more clear by half
 Than pools where other waters laugh
 Up at the breasts of coot and rail.

There, as she passed it on her way,
 I saw reflected yesterday
 A maiden with a milking-pail.

There, neither slowly nor in haste,
 One hand upon her slender waist,

The other lifted to her pail,
 She, rosy in the morning light,
 Among the water-daisies white,
 Like some fair sloop appeared to sail.

Against her ankles as she trod
 The lucky buttercups did nod.

I leaned upon the gate to see :
 The sweet thing looked, but did not
 speak ;

A dimple came in either cheek,
 And all my heart was gone from me.

Then, as I lingered on the gate,
 And she came up like coming fate,
 I saw my picture in her eyes—

Clear dancing eyes, more black than
sloes,
Cheeks like the mountain pink, that
grows
Among white-headed majesties.

I said, "A tale was made of old
That I would fain to thee unfold;
Ah! let me — let me tell the tale."
But high she held her comely head;
"I cannot heed it now," she said,
"For carrying of the milking-pail."

She laughed. What good to make
ado?

I held the gate, and she came through,
And took her homeward path anon.
From the clear pool her face had fled;
It rested on my heart instead,
Reflected when the maid was gone.

With happy youth, and work content,
So sweet and stately on she went,
Right careless of the untold tale.
Each step she took I loved her more,
And followed to her dairy door
The maiden with the milking-pail.

II.

For hearts where wakened love doth
lurk,
How fine, how blest a thing is work!
For work does good when reasons
fail —
Good; yet the axe at every stroke
The echo of a name awoke —
Her name is Mary Martindale.

I'm glad that echo was not heard
Aright by other men: a bird
Knows doubtless what his own notes
tell;
And I know not; but I can say
I felt as shame-faced all that day
As if folks heard her name right
well.

And when the west began to glow
I went — I could not choose but go —
To that same dairy on the hill;
And while sweet Mary moved about
Within, I came to her without,
And leaned upon the window-sill.

The garden border where I stood
Was sweet with pinks and southern-
wood.

I spoke — her answer seemed to
fail;
I smelt the pinks — I could not see;
The dusk came down and sheltered
me,
And in the dusk she heard my tale.

And what is left that I should tell?
I begged a kiss, I pleaded well:
The rosebud lips did long decline;
But yet I think, I think 't is true,
That, leaned at last into the dew,
One little instant they were mine.

O life! how dear thou hast become:
She laughed at dawn, and I was dumb,
But evening counsels best prevail.
Fair shine the blue that o'er her
spreads,
Green be the pastures where she treads,
The maiden with the milking-pail!

THE LETTER L.

ABSENT.

We sat on grassy slopes that meet
With sudden dip the level strand;
The trees hung overhead — our feet
Were on the sand.

Two silent girls, a thoughtful man,
We sunned ourselves in open light,
And felt such April airs as fan
The Isle of Wight;

And smelt the wall-flower in the crag
Whereon that dainty waft had fed,
Which made the bell-hung cowslip
wag
Her delicate head;

And let alighting jackdaws fleet
Adown it open-winged, and pass
Till they could touch with outstretched
feet
The warmed grass.

The happy wave ran up and rang
 Like service bells a long way off,
 And down a little freshet sprang
 From mossy trough,

And splashed into a rain of spray,
 And fretted on with daylight's loss,
 Because so many blue-bells lay
 Leaning across.

Blue martins gossiped in the sun,
 And pairs of chattering daws flew
 by,
 And sailing brigs rocked softly on
 In company.

Wild cherry boughs above us spread
 The whitest shade was ever seen,
 And flicker, flicker, came and fled
 Sun-spots between.

Bees murmured in the milk-white
 bloom
 As babes will sigh for deep content
 When their sweet hearts for peace
 make room,
 As given, not lent.

And we saw on : we said no word,
 And one was lost in musings rare,
 One buoyant as the waft that stirred
 Her shining hair.

His eyes were bent upon the sand,
 Unfathomed deeps within them lay ;
 A slender rod was in his hand —
 A hazel spray.

Her eyes were resting on his face,
 As shyly glad by stealth to glean
 Impressions of his manly grace
 And guarded mien ;

The mouth with steady sweetness set,
 And eyes conveying unaware
 The distant hint of some regret
 That harbored there.

She gazed, and in the tender flush
 That made her face like roses blown,
 And in the radiance and the hush,
 Her thought was shown.

It was a happy thing to sit
 So near, nor mar his reverie ;
 She looked not for a part in it,
 So meek was she.

But it was solace for her eyes,
 And for her heart, that yearned to
 him,
 To watch apart in loving wise
 Those musings dim.

Lost — lost, and gone ! The Pelham
 woods
 Were full of doves that cooed at
 ease ;
 The orchis filled her purple hoods
 For dainty bees.

He heard not ; all the delicate air
 Was fresh with falling water-spray :
 It mattered not — he was not there,
 But far away.

Till with the hazel in his hand,
 Still drowned in thought, it thus
 befell ;
 He drew a letter on the sand —
 The letter L.

And looking on it, straight there
 wrought
 A ruddy flush about his brow ;
 His letter woke him : absent thought
 Rushed homeward now.

And, half-abashed, his hasty touch
 Effaced it with a tell-tale care,
 As if his action had been much,
 And not his air.

And she? she watched his open palm
 Smooth out the letter from the sand,
 And rose, with aspect almost calm,
 And filled her hand

With cherry bloom, and moved away
 To gather wild forget-me-not,
 And let her errant footsteps stray
 To one sweet spot,

As if she coveted the fair
 White lining of the silver weed,
 And cuckoo-pint that shaded there
 Empurpled seed.

She had not feared, as I divine,
Because she had not hoped. Alas!
The sorrow of it! for that sign
Came but to pass;

And yet it robbed her of the right
To give, who looked not to receive,
And made her blush in love's despite
That she should grieve.

A shape in white, she turned to gaze;
Her eyes were shaded with her hand,
And half-way up the winding ways
We saw her stand.

Green hollows of the fringed cliff,
Red rocks that under waters show,
Blue reaches, and a sailing skiff,
Were spread below.

She stood to gaze, perhaps to sigh,
Perhaps to think; but who can tell
How heavy on her heart must lie
The letter L!

She came anon with quiet grace;
And "What," she murmured, "silent yet!"
He answered, "'T is a haunted place,
And spell-beset.

"O speak to us, and break the spell!"
"The spell is broken," she replied.
"I crossed the running brook, it fell,
It could not bide.

"And I have brought a budding world
Of orchis spires and daisies rank,
And ferny plumes but half uncurled,
From yonder bank;

"And I shall weave of them a crown,
And at the well-head launch it free,
That so the brook may float it down,
And out to sea.

"There may it to some English hands
From fairy meadow seem to come;
The fairest of fairy lands—
The land of home."

"Weave on," he said, and as she wove
We told how currents in the deep,
With branches from a lemon grove,
Blue bergs will sweep.

And messages from shipwrecked folk
Will navigate the moon-led main,
And painted boards of splintered oak
Their port regain.

Then floated out by vagrant thought,
My soul beheld on torrid sand
The wasteful water set at nought
Man's skilful hand,

And suck out gold-dust from the box,
And wash it down in weedy whirls,
And split the wine-keg on the rocks,
And lose the pearls.

"Ah! why to that which needs it not,"
Methought, "should costly things be
given?
How much is wasted, wrecked, forgot,
On this side heaven!"

So musing, did mine ears awake
To maiden tones of sweet reserve,
And manly speech that seemed to make
The steady curve

Of lips that uttered it defer
Their guard, and soften for the
thought:
She listened, and his talk with her
Was fancy fraught.

"There is not much in liberty"—
With doubtful pauses he began;
And said to her and said to me,
"There was a man—

"There was a man who dreamed one
night
That his dead father came to him,
And said, when fire was low, and light
Was burning dim—

"Why vagrant thus, my sometime
pride,
Unloved, unloving, wilt thou roam?
Sure home is best!" The son replied,
'I have no home.'

“‘Shall not I speak?’ his father said,
 ‘Who early chose a youthful wife,
 And worked for her, and with her led
 My happy life.

“‘Ay, I will speak, for I was young
 As thou art now, when I did hold
 The prattling sweetness of thy tongue
 Dearer than gold;

“‘And rosy from thy noonday sleep
 Would bear thee to admiring kin,
 And all thy pretty looks would keep
 My heart within.

“‘Then after, ’mid thy young allies —
 For thee ambition flushed my brow —
 I coveted the schoolboy prize
 Far more than thou.

“‘I thought for thee, I thought for all
 My gamesome imps that round me
 grew;
 The dews of blessing heaviest fall
 Where care falls too.

“‘And I that sent my boys away,
 In youthful strength to earn their
 bread,
 And died before the hair was grey
 Upon my head —

“‘I say to thee, though free from care,
 A lonely lot, an aimless life,
 The crowning comfort is not there —
 Son, take a wife.’

“‘Father beloved,’ the son replied,
 And failed to gather to his breast,
 With arms in darkness searching wide,
 The formless guest.

“‘I am but free, as sorrow is,
 To dry her tears, to laugh, to talk;
 And free, as sick men are, I wis,
 To rise and walk.

“‘And free, as poor men are, to buy
 If they have nought wherewith to
 pay;
 Nor hope the debt, before they die,
 To wipe away.

“‘What ’vails it there are wives to win,
 And faithful hearts for those to yearn,
 Who find not aught thereto akin
 To make return?

“‘Shall he take much who little gives,
 And dwells in spirit far away,
 When she that in his presence lives,
 Doth never stray,

“‘But, waking, guideth as beseems
 The happy house in order trim,
 And tends her babes; and, sleeping,
 dreams
 Of them and him?

“‘O base, O cold,’ — while thus he
 spake
 The dream broke off, the vision fled;
 He carried on his speech awake,
 And sighing said —

“‘I had — ah, happy man! — I had
 A precious jewel in my breast,
 And while I kept it I was glad
 At work, at rest!

“‘Call it a heart, and call it strong
 As upward stroke of eagle’s wing;
 Then call it weak, you shall not wrong
 The beating thing.

“‘In tangles of the jungle reed,
 Whose heats are lit with tiger eyes,
 In shipwreck drifting with the weed
 ’Neath rainy skies,

“‘Still youthful manhood, fresh and
 keen,
 At danger gazed with awed delight,
 As if sea would not drown, I ween,
 Nor serpent bite.

“‘I had — ah, happy! but ’tis gone,
 The priceless jewel; one came by,
 And saw and stood awhile to con
 With curious eye,

“‘And wished for it, and faintly smiled
 From under lashes black as doom,
 With subtle sweetness, tender, mild,
 That did illume

“The perfect face, and shed on it
A charm, half feeling, half surprise,
And brim with dreams the exquisite
Brown blessed eyes.

“Was it for this, no more but this,
I took and laid it in her hand,
By dimples ruled, to hint submiss,
By frown unmanned?

“It was for this — and O farewell
The fearless foot, the present mind,
And steady will to breast the swell
And face the wind!

“I gave the jewel from my breast,
She played with it a little while
As I sailed down into the west,
Fed by her smile;

“Then weary of it — far from land,
With sigh as deep as destiny,
She let it drop from her fair hand
Into the sea,

“And watched it sink; and I — and
I, —
What shall I do, for all is vain?
No wave will bring, no gold will buy,
No toil attain;

“Nor any diver reach to raise
My jewel from the blue abyss;
Or could they, still I should but praise
Their work amiss.

“Thrown, thrown away! But I love
yet
The fair, fair hand which did the
deed:
That wayward sweetness to forget
Were bitter meed.

“No, let it lie, and let the wave
Roll over it for evermore;
Whelmed where the sailor hath his
grave —
The sea her store.

“My heart, my sometime happy
heart!
And O for once let me complain,
I should forego life's better part —
Man's dearer gain.

“I worked afar that I might rear
A peaceful home on English soil;
I labored for the gold and gear —
I loved my toil.

“For ever in my spirit spake
The natural whisper, “Well ’twill be
When loving wife and children break
Their bread with thee!”

“The gathered gold is turned to dross,
The wife hath faded into air,
My heart is thrown away, my loss
I cannot spare.

“Not spare unsated thought her
food —
No, not one rustle of the fold,
Nor scent of eastern sandalwood,
Nor gleam of gold;

“Nor quaint devices of the shawl,
Far less the drooping lashes meek;
The gracious figure, lithe and tall,
The dimpled cheek;

“And all the wonders of her eyes,
And sweet caprices of her air,
Albeit, indignant reason cries,
Fool! have a care.

“Fool! join not madness to mistake;
Thou knowest she loved thee not a
whit;
Only that she thy heart might break —
She wanted it,

“Only the conquered thing to chain
So fast that none might set it free,
Nor other woman there might reign
And comfort thee.

“Robbed, robbed of life's illusions
sweet;
Love dead outside her closed door,
And passion fainting at her feet
To wake no more;

“What canst thou give that unknown
bride
Whom thou didst work for in the
waste,
Ere fated love was born, and cried —
Was dead, ungraced?

“No more but this, the partial care,
The natural kindness for its own,
The trust that waxeth unaware,
As worth is known:

“Observance, and complacent thought
Indulgent, and the honor due
That many another man has brought
Who brought love too.

“Nay, then, forbid it, Heaven!’ he
said,
‘The saintly vision fades from me;
O bands and chains! I cannot wed —
I am not free.’”

With that he raised his face to view;
“What think you,” asking, “of my
tale?
And was he right to let the dew
Of morn exhale,

“And burdened in the noontide sun,
The grateful shade of home forego —
Could he be right — I ask as one
Who fain would know?”

He spoke to her and spoke to me;
The rebel rose-hue dyed her cheek;
The woven crown lay on her knee;
She would not speak.

And I with doubtful pause — averse
To let occasion drift away —
I answered — “If his case were worse
Than word can say,

“Time is a healer of sick hearts,
And women have been known to
choose,
With purpose to allay their smarts,
And tend their bruise,

“These for themselves. Content to
give,
In their own lavish love complete,
Taking for sole prerogative
Their tendance sweet.

“Such meeting in their diadem
Of crowning love’s ethereal fire,
Himself he robs who robbeth them
Of their desire.

“Therefore the man who, dreaming,
cried
Against his lot that evensong,
I judge him honest, and decide
That he was wrong.”

“When I am judged, ah, may my fate,”
He whispered, “in thy code be read!
Be thou both judge and advocate.”
Then turned, he said —

“Fair weaver!” touching, while he
spoke,
The woven crown, the weaving hand,
“And do you this decree revoke,
Or may it stand?

“This friend, you ever think her
right —
She is not wrong, then?” Soft and
low
The little trembling word took flight:
She answered, “No.”

PRESENT.

A meadow where the grass was deep,
Rich, square, and golden to the view,
A belt of elms with level sweep
About it grew.

The sun beat down on it, the line
Of shade was clear beneath the trees;
There, by a clustering egplantine,
We sat at ease.

And O the buttercups! that field
O’ the cloth of gold, where pennons
swam —
Where France set up his liliated shield,
His oriflamb,

And Henry’s lion-standard rolled:
What was it to their matchless sheen,
Their million million drops of gold
Among the green!

We sat at ease in peaceful trust,
For he had written, “Let us meet;
My wife grew tired of smoke and dust,
And London heat,

"And I have found a quiet grange,
Set back in meadows sloping west,
And there our little ones can range
And she can rest.

"Come down, that we may show the
view,
And she may hear your voice again,
And talk her woman's talk with you
Along the lane."

Since he had drawn with listless hand
The letter, six long years had fled,
And winds had blown about the sand,
And they were wed.

Two rosy urchins near him played,
Or watched, entranced, the shapely
ships
That with his knife for them he made
Of elder slips.

And where the flowers were thickest
shed,
Each blossom like a burnished gem,
A creeping baby reared its head,
And cooed at them.

And calm was on the father's face,
And love was in the mother's eyes;
She looked and listened from her place,
In tender wise.

She did not need to raise her voice
That they might hear, she sat so nigh;
Yet we could speak when 'twas our
choice,
And soft reply.

Holding our quiet talk apart
Of household things; till, all unsealed,
The guarded outworks of the heart
Began to yield;

And much that prudence will not dip
The pen to fix and send away,
Passed safely over from the lip
That summer day.

"I should be happy," with a look
Towards her husband where he lay,
Lost in the pages of his book,
Soft did she say;

"I am, and yet no lot below
For one whole day eludeth care;
To marriage all the stories flow,
And finish there:

"As if with marriage came the end,
The entrance into settled rest,
The calm to which love's tossings tend,
The quiet breast.

"For me love played the low preludes,
Yet life began but with the ring,
Such infinite solitudes
Around it cling.

"I did not for my heart divine
Her destiny so meek to grow;
The higher nature matched with mine
Will have it so.

"Still I consider it, and still
Acknowledge it my master made,
Above me by the steadier will
Of nought afraid.

"Above me by the candid speech;
The temperate judgment of its own;
The keener thoughts that grasp and
reach
At things unknown.

"But I look up and he looks down,
And thus our married eyes can meet;
Unclouded his, and clear of frown,
And gravely sweet.

"And yet, O good, O wise and true!
I would for all my fealty,
That I could be as much to you
As you to me;

"And knew the deep secure content
Of wives who have been hardly won.
And, long petitioned, gave assent,
Jealous of none.

"But proudly sure in all the earth
No other in that homage shares,
Nor other woman's face or worth
Is prized as theirs."

I said: "*And yet no lot below
For one whole day eludeth care.*
Your thought." She answered, "Even
so.
I would beware

"Regretful questionings; be sure
That very seldom do they rise,
Nor for myself do I endure—
I sympathize.

"For once"—she turned away her
head,
Across the grass she swept her
hand—

"There was a letter once," she said,
"Upon the sand."

"There was, in truth, a letter writ
On sand," I said, "and swept from
view;
But that same hand which fashioned it
Is given to you.

"Efface the letter; wherefore keep
An image which the sands forego?"
"Albeit that fear had seemed to sleep,"
She answered low,

"I could not choose but wake it now;
For do but turn aside your face,
A house on yonder hilly brow
Your eyes may trace.

"The chestnut shelters it; ah me,
That I should have so faint a heart!
But yester eve, as by the sea
I sat apart,

"I heard a name, I saw a hand
Of passing stranger point that way—
And will he meet her on the strand,
When late we stray?

"For she is come, for she is there,
I heard it in the dusk, and heard
Admiring words, that named her fair,
But little stirred

"By beauty of the wood and wave,
And weary of an old man's sway!
For it was sweeter to enslave
Than to obey."

—The voice of one that near us stood,
The rustle of a silken fold,
A scent of eastern sandalwood,
A gleam of gold!

A lady! In the narrow space
Between the husband and the wife,
But nearest him—she showed a face
With dangers rife;

A subtle smile that dimpling fled,
As night-black lashes rose and fell:
I looked, and to myself I said,
"The letter L."

He, too, looked up, and with arrest
Of breath and motion held his gaze,
Nor cared to hide within his breast
His deep amaze;

Nor spoke till on her near advance
His dark cheek flushed a ruddier hue;
And with his change of countenance
Hers altered too.

"Lenore!" his voice was like the cry
Of one entreating; and he said
But that—then paused with such a
sigh
As mourns the dead.

And seated near, with no demur
Of bashful doubt she silence broke,
Though I alone could answer her
When first she spoke.

She looked: her eyes were beauty's
own;
She shed their sweetness into his;
Nor spared the married wife one moan
That bitterest is.

She spoke, and, lo, her loveliness
Methought she damaged with her
tongue;
And every sentence made it less,
So false they rung.

The rallying voice, the light demand,
Half flippant, half unsatisfied;
The vanity sincere and bland—
The answers wide.

And now her talk was of the East,
 And next her talk was of the sea ;
 " And has the love for it increased
 You shared with me ? "

He answered not, but grave and still
 With earnest eyes her face perused,
 And locked his lips with steady will,
 As one that mused —

That mused and wondered. Why his
 gaze
 Should dwell on her, methought, was
 plain ;
 But reason that should wonder raise
 I sought in vain.

And near and near the children drew,
 Attracted by her rich array,
 And gems that trembling into view
 Like raindrops lay.

He spoke : the wife her baby took
 And pressed the little face to hers ;
 What pain so'er her bosom shook,
 What jealous stirs

Might stab her heart, she hid them so,
 The cooing babe a veil supplied ;
 And if she listened none might know,
 Or if she sighed ;

Or if, forecasting grief and care,
 Unconscious solace thence she drew,
 And lulled her babe, and unaware
 Lulled sorrow too.

The lady, she interpreter
 For looks or language wanted none,
 If yet dominion stayed with her —
 So lightly won :

If yet the heart she wounded sore
 Could yearn to her, and let her see
 The homage that was evermore
 Disloyalty ;

If sign would yield that it had bled,
 Or rallied from the faithless blow,
 Or sick or sullen stooped to wed,
 She craved to know.

Now dreamy deep, now sweetly keen,
 Her asking eyes would round him
 shine ;
 But guarded lips and settled mien
 Refused the sign.

And unbeguiled and unbetrayed,
 The wonder yet within his breast,
 It seemed a watchful part he played
 Against her quest.

Until with accent of regret
 She touched upon the past once
 more,
 As if she dared him to forget
 His dream of yore.

And words of little weight let fall
 The fancy of the lower mind ;
 How waxing life must needs leave all
 Its best behind ;

How he had said that " he would fain
 (One morning on the halcyon sea)
 That life would at a stand remain
 Eternally ;

" And sails be mirrored in the deep,
 As then they were, for evermore,
 And happy spirits wake and sleep
 Afar from shore :

" The well-contented heart be fed
 Ever as then, and all the world
 (It were not small) unshadowed
 When sails were furled.

" Your words " — a pause, and quietly
 With touch of calm self-ridicule :
 " It may be so — for then," said he,
 " I was a fool."

With that he took his book, and left
 An awkward silence to my care,
 That soon I filled with questions deft
 And debonair ;

And slid into an easy vein,
 The favorite picture of the year ;
 The grouse upon her lord's domain —
 The salmon weir ;

Till she could feign a sudden thought
Upon neglected guests, and rise
And make us her adieux, with nought
In her dark eyes

Acknowledging or shame or pain ;
But just unveiling for our view
A little smile of still disdain
As she withdrew.

Then nearer did the sunshine creep,
And warmer came the wafting
breeze ;
The little babe was fast asleep
On mother's knees.

Fair was the face that o'er it leant,
The cheeks with beauteous blushes
died ;
The downcast lashes, shyly bent,
That failed to hide

Some tender shame. She did not see ;
She felt his eyes that would not stir ;
She looked upon her babe, and he
So looked at her.

So grave, so wondering, so content,
As one new waked to conscious life,
Whose sudden joy with fear is blent,
He said, "My wife."

"My wife, how beautiful you are !"
Then closer at her side reclined ;
"The bold brown woman from afar
Comes, to me blind.

"And by comparison I see
The majesty of matron grace,
And learn how pure, how fair can be
My own wife's face :

"Pure with all faithful passion, fair
With tender smiles that come and
go ;
And comforting as April air
After the snow.

"Fool that I was ! my spirit frets
And marvels at the humbling truth,
That I have deigned to spend regrets
On my bruised youth.

"Its idol mocked thee, seated nigh,
And shamed me for the mad mis-
take ;
I thank my God He could deny,
And she forsake.

"Ah, who am I, that God hath saved
Me from the doom I did desire,
And crossed the lot myself had craved,
To set me higher ?

"What have I done that He should
bow
From heaven to choose a wife for
me ?
And what deserved, he should endow
My home with THEE ?

"My wife !" With that she turned
her face
To kiss the hand about her neck ;
And I went down and sought the place
Where leaped the beck —

The busy beck, that still would run
And fall, and falter its refrain ;
And pause and shimmer in the sun,
And fall again.

It led me to the sandy shore,
We sang together, it and I —
"The daylight comes, the dark is o'er,
The shadows fly."

I lost it on the sandy shore,
"O wife !" its latest murmurs fell,
"O wife, be glad, and fear no more
The letter L."

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE.

(1571.)

THE old mayor climbed the belfry
tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three ;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before ;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth
he.

"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston
bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe 'The Brides of Ender-
by.'"

Men say it was a stolen tyde —
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, be-
side
The flight of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea
wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne
eyes;

The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sohne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song,
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along;
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song —

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
"For the dews will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe,
Lightfoot;
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe,
Lightfoot,
Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."

If it be long, ay, long ago,
When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;

And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save where full fyve good miles away
The steeple towered from out the
greene;
And lo! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country side
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came downe that kyndly message free,
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows.
They sayde, "And why should this
thing be?
What danger lowers by land or sea?
They ring the tune of Enderby!

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping down;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the
towne:
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring 'The Brides of Enderby'?"

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and
main:
He raised a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin rang again,
"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my soune's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market-place."

He shook as one that looks on death :
 "God save you, mother!" straight he
 saith ;
 "Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds her
 way, [long ;
 With her two bairns I marked her
 And ere yon bells beganne to play
 Afar I heard her milking song."
 He looked across the grassy lea,
 To right, to left, "Ho, Enderby!"
 They rang "The Brides of Enderby!"

With that he cried and beat his breast ;
 For, lo! along the river's bed
 A mighty eygre reared his crest,
 And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
 It swept with thunderous noises loud ;
 Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
 Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed
 Shook all her trembling bankes
 amaine ;
 Then madly at the eygre's breast
 Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
 Then bankes came downe with ruin and
 rout —
 Then beaten foam flew round about —
 Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
 The heart had hardly time to beat
 Before a shallow seething wave
 Sobbed in the grasses at our feet :
 The feet had hardly time to flee
 Before it brake against the knee,
 And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the rooffe we sate that night,
 The noise of bells went sweeping by ;
 I marked the lofty beacon light
 Stream from the church tower, red
 and high —
 A lurid mark and dread to see ;
 And awsome bells they were to mee,
 That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
 From rooffe to rooffe who fearless
 rowed ;
 And I — my sonne was at my side,
 And yet the ruddy beacon glowed ;

And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
 "O come in life, or come in death!
 O lost! my love, Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more?
 Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter
 deare ;
 The waters laid thee at his doore,
 Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
 Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
 The lifted sun shone on thy face,
 Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the
 grass,
 That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea ;
 A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!
 To manye more than myne and mee :
 But each will mourn his own (she saith) ;
 And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
 By the reedy Lindis shore,
 "Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
 Ere the early dewes be falling ;
 I shall never hear her song,
 "Cusha! Cusha!" all along
 Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
 Goeth, floweth ; [eth,
 From the meads where melick grow-
 When the water winding down,
 Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
 Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
 Shiver, quiver ;
 Stand beside the sobbing river,
 Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
 To the sandy lonesome shore ;
 I shall never hear her calling,
 "Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow ;
 Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;
 Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe,
 Lightfoot ;
 Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow ;
 Come uppe, Lightfoot, rise and fol-
 low ;
 Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
 From your clovers lift the head ;
 Come uppe, Jetty, follow, follow,
 Jetty, to the milking shed."

AFTERNOON AT A PARSON-
AGE.(THE PARSON'S BROTHER, SISTER, AND
TWO CHILDREN.)*Preface.*

WHAT wonder man should fail to stay
A nursling wafted from above,
The growth celestial come astray,
That tender growth whose name is
Love!

It is as if high winds in heaven
Had shaken the celestial trees,
And to this earth below had given
Some feathered seeds from one of
these.

O perfect love that 'dureth long!
Dear growth, that, shaded by the
palms,
And breathed on by the angel's song,
Blooms on in heaven's eternal calms!

How great the task to guard thee here,
Where wind is rough, and frost is
keen,
And all the ground with doubt and fear
Is chequered birth and death be-
tween!

Space is against thee—it can part;
Time is against thee—it can chill;
Words—they but render half the
heart;
Deeds—they are poor to our rich
will.

Merton. Though she had loved me, I
had never bound
Her beauty to my darkness; that had
been
Too hard for her. Sadder to look so
near
Into a face all shadow, than to stand
Aloof, and then withdraw, and after-
wards
Suffer forgetfulness to comfort her.

I think so, and I loved her; therefore I
Have no complaint; albeit she is not
mine:

And yet—and yet, withdrawing I would
fain

She would have pleaded duty—would
have said

“My father wills it;” would have
turned away,

As lingering, or unwillingly; for then
She would have done no damage to
the past:

Now she has roughly used it—flung it
down

And brushed its bloom away. If she
had said,

“Sir, I have promised; therefore, lo!
my hand”—

Would I have taken it? Ah, no! by all
Most sacred, no!

I would for my sole share
Have taken first her recollected blush
The day I won her; next her shining
tears—

The tears of our long parting; and for all
The rest—her cry, her bitter heart-
sick cry,

That day or night (I know not which
it was,

The days being always night), that
darkest night,

When being led to her I heard her cry,
“O blind! blind! blind!”

Go with thy chosen mate:
The fashion of thy going nearly cured
The sorrow of it. I am yet so weak
That half my thoughts go after thee;
but not

So weak that I desire to have it so.

JESSIE, seated at the piano, sings.

When the dimpled water slippeth,
Full of laughter, on its way,
And her wing the wagtail dippeth,
Running by the brink at play;
When the poplar leaves atremble
Turn their edges to the light,
And the far-up clouds resemble
Veils of gauze most clear and white;
And the sunbeams fall and flatter
Woodland moss and branches brown,
And the glossy finches chatter
Up and down, up and down:

Though the heart be not attending,
 Having music of her own,
 On the grass, through meadows wending,
 It is sweet to walk alone.

When the falling waters utter
 Something mournful on their way,
 And departing swallows flutter,
 Taking leave of bank and brae ;
 When the chaffinch idly sitteth
 With her mate upon the sheaves,
 And the wistful robin flitteth
 Over beds of yellow leaves ;
 When the clouds, like ghosts that ponder
 Evil fate, float by and frown,
 And the listless wind doth wander
 Up and down, up and down :
 Though the heart be not attending,
 Having sorrows of her own,
 Through the fields and fallows wending,
 It is sad to walk alone.

Merton. Blind! blind! blind!
 Oh! sitting in the dark for evermore,
 And doing nothing — putting out a hand
 To feel what lies about me, and to say
 Not "This is blue or red," but "This
 is cold,
 And this the sun is shining on, and this
 I know not till they tell its name to me."

O that I might behold once more, my
 God!
 The shining rulers of the night and day ;
 Or a star twinkling ; or an almond-tree,
 Pink with her blossom and alive with
 bees,
 Standing against the azure! O my
 sight!
 Lost, and yet living in the sunlit cells
 Of memory — that only lightsome place
 Where lingers yet the dayspring of my
 youth :
 The years of mourning for thy death
 are long.

Be kind, sweet memory! O desert me
 not!
 For oft thou show'st me lucent opal
 seas,

Fringed with their cocoa-palms, and
 dwarf red crags,
 Whereon the placid moon doth "rest
 her chin ;"
 For oft by favor of thy visitings
 I feel the dimness of an Indian night,
 And lo! the sun is coming. Red as
 rust
 Between the latticed blind his pres-
 ence burns,
 A ruby ladder running up the wall ;
 And all the dust, printed with pigeons'
 feet,
 Is reddened, and the crows that stalk
 anear
 Begin to trail for heat their glossy
 wings,
 And the red flowers give back at once
 the dew,
 For night is gone, and day is born so
 fast,
 And is so strong, that, huddled as in
 flight,
 The fleeting darkness paleth to a
 shade,
 And while she calls to sleep and dreams
 "Come on,"
 Suddenly waked, the sleepers rub
 their eyes,
 Which having opened, lo! she is no
 more.

O misery and mourning! I have felt —
 Yes, I have felt like some deserted
 world
 That God had done with, and had cast
 aside
 To rock and stagger through the gulfs
 of space,
 He never looking on it any more —
 Untilled, no use, no pleasure, not de-
 sired,
 Nor lighted on by angels in their
 flight
 From heaven to happier planets, and
 the race
 That once had dwelt on it withdrawn
 or dead.
 Could such a world have hope that
 some blest day
 God would remember her, and fashion
 her
 Anew?

Jessie. What, dearest? Did you speak to me?

Child. I think he spoke to us.

M. No, little elves,
You were so quiet that I half forgot
Your neighborhood. What are you
doing there?

J. They sit together on the window-
mat

Nursing their dolls.

C. Yes, Uncle, our new dolls —
Our best dolls, that you gave us.

M. Did you say
The afternoon was bright?

J. Yes, bright indeed!
The sun is on the plane-tree, and it
flames

All red and orange.

C. I can see my father —
Look! look! the leaves are falling on
his gown.

M. Where?

C. In the churchyard, Uncle —
he is gone;

He passed behind the tower.

M. I heard a bell:
There is a funeral, then, behind the
church.

2d Child. Are the trees sorry when
their leaves drop off?

1st Child. You talk such silly words;
— no, not at all.

There goes another leaf.

2d Child. I did not see.

1st Child. Look! on the grass, be-
tween the little hills,

Just where they planted Amy.

J. Amy died —
Dear little Amy! when you talk of her,
Say, she is gone to heaven.

2d Child. They planted her —
Will she come up next year?

1st Child. No, not so soon;
But some day God will call her to come
up,

And then she will. Papa knows every
thing —

He said she would before he planted
her.

2d Child. It was at night she went
to heaven. Last night

We saw a star before we went to bed.

1st Child. Yes, Uncle, did you know?
A large bright star,

And at her side she had some little
ones —

Some young ones.

M. Young ones! no, my little maid,
Those stars are very old.

1st Child. What! all of them?

M. Yes.

1st Child. Older than our father?

M. Older, far.

2d Child. They must be tired of
shining there so long.

Perhaps they wish they might come
down.

J. Perhaps!

Dear children, talk of what you under-
stand.

Come, I must lift the trailing creepers
up

That last night's wind has loosened.

1st Child. May we help?

Aunt, may we help to nail them?

J. We shall see.

Go, find and bring the hammer, and
some shreds.

[*Steps outside the window, lifts a
branch, and sings.*]

Should I change my allegiance for ran-
cor

If fortune changes her side?

Or should I, like a vessel at anchor,

Turn with the turn of the tide?

Lift! O lift, thou lowering sky;

An thou wilt, thy gloom forego!

An thou wilt not, he and I

Need not part for drifts of snow.

M. [*within*]. Lift! no, thou lower-
ing sky, thou wilt not lift —

Thy motto readeth, "Never."

Children. Here they are!

Here are the nails! and may we help?

J. You shall,

If I should want help.

1st Child. Will you want it, then?

Please want it — we like nailing.

2d Child. Yes, we do.

J. It seems I ought to want it; hold
the bough,

And each may nail in turn.

[Sings.]

Like a daisy I was, near him growing:
Must I move because favors flag,
And be like a brown wall-flower blowing
Far out of reach in a crag?
Lift! O lift, thou lowering sky;
An thou canst, thy blue regain!
An thou canst not, he and I
Need not part for drops of rain.

1st Child. Now, have we nailed
enough?

J. [trains the creepers]. Yes, you
may go;

But do not play too near the church-
yard path.

M. [w. thin]. Even misfortune does
not strike so near

As my dependence. O, in youth and
strength

To sit a timid coward in the dark,
And feel before I set a cautious step!
It is so very dark, so far more dark
Than any night that day comes after —
night

In which there would be stars, or else
at least

The silvered portion of a sombre cloud
Through which the moon is plunging.

J. [entering]. Merton!

M. Yes.

J. Dear Merton, did you know that
I could hear?

M. No: e'en my solitude is not
mine now,

And if I be alone is oft-times doubt.

Alas! far more than eyesight have I
lost;

For manly courage drifteth after it —

E'en as a splintered spar would drift
away

From some dismantled wreck. Hear, I
complain —

Like a weak ailing woman I complain.

J. For the first time.

M. I cannot bear the dark.

J. My brother! you do bear it —
bear it well —

Have borne it twelve long months, and
not complained.

Comfort your heart with music: all the
air

Is warm with sunbeams where the organ
stands.

You like to feel them on you. Come
and play.

M. My fate, my fate, is lonely!

J. So it is —

I know it is.

M. And pity breaks my heart.

J. Does it, dear Merton?

M. Yes, I say it does.

What! do you think I am so dull of ear
That I can mark no changes in the tones
That reach me? Once I liked not girl-
ish pride

And that coy quiet, chary of reply,
That held me distant: now the sweet-
est lips

Open to entertain me — fairest hands
Are proffered me to guide.

J. That is not well?

M. No: give me coldness, pride, or
still disdain,

Gentle withdrawal. Give me any thing
But this — a fearless, sweet, confiding
ease,

Whereof I may expect, I may exact,
Considerate care, and have it — gentle
speech,

And have it. Give me any thing but
this!

For they who give it, give it in the faith
That I will not misdeem them, and for-
get

My doom so far as to perceive thereby
Hope of a wife. They make this
thought too plain;

They wound me — O they cut me to
the heart!

When have I said to any one of them,
"I am a blind and desolate man; —
come here,

I pray you — be as eyes to me?" When
said,

Even to her whose pitying voice is
sweet

To my dark ruined heart, as must be
hands

That clasp a lifelong captive's through
the grate,

And who will ever lend her delicate aid
To guide me, dark incumbrance that I
am! —

When have I said to her, "Comfort-
ing voice,

Belonging to a face unknown, I pray
Be my wife's voice?"

J. Never, my brother — no,
You never have!

M. What could she think of me
If I forgot myself so far? or what
Could she reply?

J. You ask not as men ask
Who care for an opinion, else, perhaps,
Although I am not sure — although,
perhaps,

I have no right to give one — I should
say
She would reply, "I will!"

Afterthought.

Man dwells apart, though not alone,
He walks among his peers unread;
The best of thoughts which he hath
known
For lack of listeners are not said.

Yet dreaming on earth's clustered isles,
He saith, "They dwell not lone like
men,"

Forgetful that their sunflecked smiles
Flash far beyond each other's ken.

He looks on God's eternal suns
That sprinkle the celestial blue,
And saith, "Ah! happy shining ones,
I would that men were grouped like
you!"

Yet this is sure: the loveliest star
That clustered with its peers we see,
Only because from us so far
Doth near its fellows seem to be.

SONGS OF SEVEN.

SEVEN TIMES ONE. EXULTATION.

THERE's no dew left on the daisies and
clover,
There's no rain left in heaven:
I've said my "seven times" over and
over,
Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter;
My birthday lessons are done;
The lambs play always, they know no
better;
They are only one times one.

O moon! in the night I have seen you
sailing
And shining so round and low;
You were bright! ah, bright! but your
light is failing, —
You are nothing now but a bow.

You moon, have you done something
wrong in heaven
That God has hidden your face?
I hope if you have you will soon be
forgiven,
And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,
You've powdered your legs with gold!
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yel-
low,
Give me your money to hold!

O columbine, open your folded wrap-
per,
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!
O cuckoopint, toll me the purple clap-
per
That hangs in your clear green bell!

And show me your nest with the young
ones in it;
I will not steal them away;
I am old! you may trust me, linnet,
linnet —
I am seven times one to-day.

SEVEN TIMES TWO. ROMANCE.

You bells in the steeple, ring, ring out
your changes,
How many soever they be,
And let the brown meadow-lark's note
as he ranges
Come over, come over to me.

Yet birds' clearest carol by fall or by
 swelling
 No magical sense conveys,
 And bells have forgotten their old art
 of telling
 The fortune of future days.

"Turn again, turn again," once they
 rang cheerily,
 While a boy listened alone ;
 Made his heart yearn again, musing so
 wearily
 All by himself on a stone.

Poor bells! I forgive you ; your good
 days are over,
 And mine, they are yet to be ;
 No listening, no longing shall aught,
 aught discover :
 You leave the story to me.

The foxglove shoots out of the green
 matted heather,
 Preparing her hoods of snow ;
 She was idle, and slept till the sun-
 shiny weather :
 O, children take long to grow.

I wish and I wish that the spring
 would go faster,
 Nor long summer bide so late ;
 And I could grow on like the foxglove
 and aster,
 For some things are ill to wait.

I wait for the day when dear hearts
 shall discover,
 While dear hands are laid on my
 head ;
 "The child is a woman, the book may
 close over,
 For all the lessons are said."

I wait for my story — the birds cannot
 sing it,
 Not one, as he sits on the tree ;
 The bells cannot ring it, but long years,
 O bring it!
 Such as I wish it to be.

SEVEN TIMES THREE. LOVE.

I leaned out of window, I smelt the
 white clover,
 Dark, dark was the garden, I saw
 not the gate ;
 "Now, if there be footsteps, he comes,
 my one lover —
 Hush, nightingale, hush ! O, sweet
 nightingale, wait
 Till I listen and hear
 If a step draweth near,
 For my love he is late !

"The skies in the darkness stoop nearer
 and nearer,
 A cluster of stars hangs like fruit in
 the tree,
 The fall of the water comes sweeter,
 comes clearer :
 To what art thou listening, and what
 dost thou see ?
 Let the star-clusters grow,
 Let the sweet waters flow,
 And cross quickly to me.

"You night moths that hover where
 honey brims over
 From sycamore blossoms, or settle
 or sleep ;
 You glowworms, shine out, and the
 pathway discover
 To him that comes darkling along
 the rough steep.
 Ah, my sailor, make haste,
 For the time runs to waste,
 And my love lieth deep —

"Too deep for swift telling ; and yet,
 my one lover,
 I've conned thee an answer, it waits
 thee to-night."
 By the sycamore passed he, and through
 the white clover,
 Then all the sweet speech I had
 fashioned took flight ;
 But I'll love him more, more
 Than e'er wife loved before,
 Be the days dark or bright.

SEVEN TIMES FOUR. MATERNITY.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
 Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall!
 When the wind wakes how they rock
 in the grasses,
 And dance with the cuckoo-buds
 slender and small!
 Here's two bonny boys, and here's
 mother's own lasses,
 Eager to gather them all.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups!
 Mother shall thread them a daisy
 chain;
 Sing them a song of the pretty hedge
 sparrow,
 That loved her brown little ones,
 loved them full fain;
 Sing, "Heart, thou art wide though
 the house be but narrow" —
 Sing once, and sing it again.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
 Sweet wagging cowslips, they bend
 and they bow;
 A ship sails afar over warm ocean
 waters,
 And haply one musing doth stand at
 her prow.
 O bonny brown sons, and O sweet little
 daughters,
 Maybe he thinks on you now!

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
 Fair yellow daffodils, stately and
 tall!
 A sunshiny world full of laughter and
 leisure,
 And fresh hearts unconscious of sor-
 row and thrall!
 Send down on their pleasure smiles
 passing its measure,
 God that is over us all!

SEVEN TIMES FIVE. WIDOWHOOD.

I sleep and rest, my heart makes moan
 Before I am well awake;
 "Let me bleed! O let me alone,
 Since I must not break!"

For children wake, though fathers sleep
 With a stone at foot and at head:
 O sleepless God, for ever keep,
 Keep both living and dead!

I lift mine eyes, and what to see
 But a world happy and fair!
 I have not wished it to mourn with
 me —
 Comfort is not there.

O what anear but golden brooms,
 And a waste of reedy rills!
 O what afar but the fine glooms
 On the rare blue hills!

I shall not die, but live forlore —
 How bitter it is to part!
 O to meet thee, my love, once more!
 O my heart, my heart!

No more to hear, no more to see!
 O that an echo might wake
 And waft one note of thy psalm to me
 Ere my heart-strings break!

I should know it how faint soe'er,
 And with angel voices blent;
 O once to feel thy spirit anear;
 I could be content!

Or once between the gates of gold,
 While an entering angel trod,
 But once — thee sitting to behold
 On the hills of God!

SEVEN TIMES SIX. GIVING IN MARRIAGE.

To bear, to nurse, to rear,
 To watch, and then to lose:
 To see my bright ones disappear,
 Drawn up like morning dew —
 To bear, to nurse, to rear,
 To watch, and then to lose:
 This have I done when God drew near
 Among his own to choose.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
 And with thy lord depart
 In tears that he, as soon as shed,
 Will let no longer smart. —

To hear, to heed, to wed,
 This while thou didst I smiled,
 For now it was not God who said,
 "Mother, give ME thy child."

O fond, O fool, and blind !
 To God I gave with tears ;
 But when a man like grace would find,
 My soul put by her fears —
 O fond, O fool, and blind !
 God guards in happier spheres ;
 That man will guard where he did bind
 Is hope for unknown years.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
 Fair lot that maidens choose,
 Thy mother's tenderest words are said,
 Thy face no more she views ;
 Thy mother's lot, my dear,
 She doth in nought accuse ;
 Her lot to bear, to nurse, to rear,
 To love — and then to lose.

SEVEN TIMES SEVEN. LONGING FOR
 HOME.

I.

A song of a boat : —
 There was once a boat on a billow :
 Lightly she rocked to her port remote,
 And the foam was white in her wake
 like snow,
 And her frail mast bowed when the
 breeze would blow,
 And bent like a wand of willow.

II.

I shaded mine eyes one day when a
 boat
 Went curtsying over the billow,
 I marked her course till a dancing
 mote
 She faded out on the moonlit foam,
 And I stayed behind in the dear loved
 home ;
 And my thoughts all day were about
 the boat
 And my dreams upon the pillow.

III.

I pray you hear my song of a boat,
 For it is but short : —
 My boat, you shall find none fairer
 afloat,
 In river or port.
 Long I looked out for the lad she
 bore,
 On the open desolate sea,
 And I think he sailed to the heavenly
 shore,
 For he came not back to me —
 Ah me !

IV.

A song of a nest : —
 There was once a nest in a hollow :
 Down in the mosses and knot-grass
 pressed,
 Soft and warm, and full to the brim —
 Vetches leaned over it purple and dim,
 With buttercup buds to follow.

V.

I pray you hear my song of a nest,
 For it is not long : —
 You shall never light, in a summer
 quest
 The bushes among —
 Shall never light on a prouder sitter,
 A fairer nestful, nor ever know
 A softer sound than their tender twitter,
 That wind-like did come and go.

VI.

I had a nestful once of my own,
 Ah, happy, happy I !
 Right dearly I loved them : but when
 they were grown
 They spread out their wings to fly —
 O, one after one they flew away
 Far up to the heavenly blue,
 To the better country, the upper day,
 And — I wish I was going too.

VII.

I pray you, what is the nest to me,
 My empty nest ?
 And what is the shore where I stood to
 see
 My boat sail down to the west ?

Can I call that home where I anchor
 yet,
 Though my good man has sailed?
 Can I call that home where my nest
 was set,
 Now all its hope hath failed?
 Nay, but the port where my sailor
 went,
 And the land where my nestlings
 be:
 There is the home where my thoughts
 are sent,
 The only home for me —
 Ah me!



A COTTAGE IN A CHINE.

We reached the place by night,
 And heard the waves breaking:
 They came to meet us with candles
 alight
 To show the path we were taking.
 A myrtle, trained on the gate, was
 white
 With tufted flowers down shaking.

With head beneath her wing,
 A little wren was sleeping —
 So near, I had found it an easy thing
 To steal her for my keeping
 From the myrtle bough that with easy
 swing
 Across the path was sweeping.

Down rocky steps rough-hewed,
 Where cup-mosses flowered,
 And under the trees, all twisted and
 rude,
 Wherewith the dell was dowered,
 They led us, where deep in its solitude
 Lay the cottage, leaf-embowered.

The thatch was all bespread
 With climbing passion flowers;
 They were wet, and glistened with rain-
 drops, shed
 That day in genial showers.
 "Was never a sweeter nest," we said,
 "Than this little nest of ours."

We laid us down to sleep:
 But as for me — waking,
 I marked the plunge of the muffled
 deep
 On its sandy reaches breaking;
 For heart-joyance doth sometimes keep
 From slumber, like heart-aching.

And I was glad that night,
 With no reason ready,
 To give my own heart for its deep de-
 light,
 That flowed like some tidal eddy,
 Or shone like a star that was rising
 bright
 With comforting radiance steady.

But on a sudden — hark!
 Music struck asunder
 Those meshes of bliss, and I wept in
 the dark,
 So sweet was the unseen wonder;
 So swiftly it touched, as if struck at a
 mark,
 The trouble that joy kept under.

I rose — the moon outshone:
 I saw the sea heaving,
 And a little vessel sailing alone,
 The small crisp wavelet cleaving;
 'T was she as she sailed to her port un-
 known —
 Was that track of sweetness leaving.

We know they music made
 In heaven, ere man's creation;
 But when God threw it down to us
 that strayed,
 It dropt with lamentation,
 And ever since doth its sweetness shade
 With sighs for its first station.

Its joy suggests regret —
 Its most for more is yearning;
 And it brings to the soul that its voice
 hath met
 No rest that cadence learning,
 But a conscious part in the sighs that
 fret
 Its nature for returning.

O Eve, sweet Eve! methought
 When sometimes comfort winning,
 As she watched the first children's
 tender sport,
 Sole joy born since her sinning,
 If a bird anear them sang, it brought
 The pang as at beginning.

While swam the unshed tear,
 Her prattlers, little heeding,
 Would murmur, "This bird, with its
 carol clear,
 When the red clay was kneaden,
 And God made Adam our father dear,
 Sang to him thus in Eden."

The moon went in — the sky
 And earth and sea hiding;
 I laid me down, with the yearning sigh
 Of that strain in my heart abiding;
 I slept, and the barque that had sailed
 so nigh
 In my dream was ever gliding.

I slept, but waked amazed,
 With sudden noise frightened,
 And voices without, and a flash that
 dazed
 My eyes from candles lighted.
 "Ah! surely," methought, "by these
 shouts upraised,
 Some travellers are benighted."

A voice was at my side —
 "Waken, madam, waken!
 The long prayed-for ship at her anchor
 doth ride.
 Let the child from its rest be taken,
 For the captain doth weary for babe
 and for bride —
 Waken, madam, waken!

"The home you left but late,
 He speeds to it light-hearted;
 By the wires he sent this news, and
 straight
 To you with it they started."
 O joy for a yearning heart too great,
 O union for the parted!

We rose up in the night,
 The morning star was shining;
 We carried the child in its slumber
 light
 Out by the myrtles twining:
 Orion over the sea hung bright,
 And glorious in declining.

Mother, to meet her son,
 Smiled first, then wept the rather;
 And wife, to bind up those links un-
 done,
 And cherished words to gather,
 And to show the face of her little one,
 That had never seen its father.

That cottage in a chine,
 We were not to behold it;
 But there may the purest of sunbeams
 shine,
 May freshest flowers enfold it,
 For sake of the news which our hearts
 must twine
 With the bower where we were told it!

Now oft, left alone again,
 Sit mother and sit daughter,
 And bless the good ship that sailed
 over the main,
 And the favoring winds that brought
 her;
 While still some new beauty they fable
 and feign
 For the cottage by the water.

PERSEPHONE.

Written for THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY,
 January, 1862.

Subject given — "Light and Shade."

SHE stepped upon Sicilian grass,
 Demeter's daughter fresh and fair,
 A child of light, a radiant lass,
 And gamesome as the morning air.
 The daffodils were fair to see,
 They nodded lightly on the lea,
 Persephone — Persephone!

Lo! one she marked of rarer growth
 Than orchis or anemone;
 For it the maiden left them both,
 And parted from her company.
 Drawn nigh she deemed it fairer still,
 And stooped to gather by the rill
 The daffodil, the daffodil.

What ailed the meadow that it shook?
 What ailed the air of Sicily?
 She wondered by the brattling brook,
 And trembled with the trembling lea.
 "The coal-black horses rise — they
 rise:
 O mother, mother!" low she cries —
 Persephone — Persephone!

"O light, light, light!" she cries,
 "farewell;
 The coal-black horses wait for me.
 O shade of shades, where I must dwell,
 Demeter, mother, far from thee!
 Ah, fated doom that I fulfil!
 Ah, fateful flower beside the rill!
 The daffodil, the daffodil!"

What ails her that she comes not home?
 Demeter seeks her far and wide,
 And gloomy-browed doth ceaseless
 roam
 From many a morn till eventide.
 "My life, immortal though it be,
 Is nought," she cries, "for want of
 thee,
 Persephone — Persephone!

"Meadows of Enna, let the rain
 No longer drop to feed your rills,
 Nor dew refresh the fields again,
 With all their nodding daffodils!
 Fade, fade and droop, O lilyed lea,
 Where thou, dear heart, wert reft from
 me —
 Persephone — Persephone!"

She reigns upon her dusky throne,
 'Mid shades of heroes dread to see;
 Among the dead she breathes alone,
 Persephone — Persephone!
 Or seated on the Elysian hill
 She dreams of earthly daylight still,
 And murmurs of the daffodil.

A voice in Hades soundeth clear,
 The shadows mourn and flit below;
 It cries — "Thou Lord of Hades, hear,
 And let Demeter's daughter go.
 The tender corn upon the lea
 Droops in her goddess gloom when she
 Cries for her lost Persephone.

"From land to land she raging flies,
 The green fruit falleth in her wake,
 And harvest fields beneath her eyes
 To earth the grain unripened shake.
 Arise, and set the maiden free;
 Why should the world such sorrow dree
 By reason of Persephone?"

He takes the cleft pomegranate seeds:
 "Love, eat with me this parting
 day;"
 Then bids them fetch the coal-black
 steeds —
 "Demeter's daughter, wouldst
 away?"
 The gates of Hades set her free;
 "She will return full soon," saith he —
 "My wife, my wife Persephone."

Low laughs the dark king on his
 throne —
 "I gave her of pomegranate seeds."
 Demeter's daughter stands alone
 Upon the fair Eleusian meads.
 Her mother meets her. "Hail," saith
 she;
 "And doth our daylight dazzle thee,
 My love, my child Persephone?"

"What moved thee, daughter, to for-
 sake
 Thy fellow-maids that fatal morn,
 And give thy dark lord power to take
 Thee living to his realm forlorn?"
 Her lips reply without her will,
 As one addressed who slumbereth
 still —
 "The daffodil, the daffodil!"

Her eyelids droop with light oppressed,
 And sunny wafts that round her stir,
 Her cheek upon her mother's breast —
 Demeter's kisses comfort her.
 Calm Queen of Hades, art thou she
 Who stepped so lightly on the lea —
 Persephone, Persephone?

When, in her destined course, the moon
Meets the deep shadow of this world,
And laboring on doth seem to swoon
Through awful wastes of dimness
whirled—

Emerged at length, no trace hath she
Of that dark hour of destiny,
Still silvery sweet — Persephone.

The greater world may near the less,
And draw it through her weltering
shade,

But not one biding trace impress
Of all the darkness that she made ;
The greater soul that draweth thee
Hath left his shadow plain to see
On thy fair face, Persephone !

Demeter sighs, but sure 'tis well
The wife should love her destiny :
They part, and yet, as legends tell,
She mourns her lost Persephone ;
While chant the maids of Enna still—
"O fateful flower beside the rill—
The daffodil, the daffodil !"

A SEA SONG.

OLD ALBION sat on a crag of late,
And sung out— "Ahoy! ahoy!
Long life to the captain, good luck to
the mate,
And this to my sailor boy!
Come over, come home,
Through the salt sea foam,
My sailor, my sailor boy!

"Here's a crown to be given away, I
ween,
A crown for my sailor's head,
And all for the worth of a widowed
queen,
And the love of the noble dead,
And the fear and fame
Of the island's name
Where my boy was born and bred.

"Content thee, content thee, let it
alone,
Thou marked for a choice so rare ;
Though treaties be treaties, never a
throne

Was proffered for cause as fair.
Yet come to me home,
Through the salt sea foam,
For the Greek must ask elsewhere.

"'Tis pity, my sailor, but who can tell?
Many lands they look to me ;
One of these might be wanting a Prince
as well,
But that's as hereafter may be."
She raised her white head
And laughed ; and she said,
"That's as hereafter may be."

BROTHERS, AND A SERMON.

IT was a village built in a green rent,
Between two cliffs that skirt the dan-
gerous bay.

A reef of level rock runs out to sea,
And you may lie on it and look sheer
down,
Just where the "Grace of Sunderland"
was lost,
And see the elastic banners of the dulse
Rock softly, and the orange star-fish
creep
Across the laver, and the mackerel
shoot
Over and under it, like silver boats
Turning at will and plying under water.

There on that reef we lay upon our
breasts, [lads,
My brother and I, and half the village
For an old fisherman had called to us
With "Sirs, the syle be come." "And
what are they?"
My brother said. "Good lack!" the
old man cried,
And shook his head; "to think you
gentlefolk
Should ask what syle be! Look you;
I can't say
What syle be called in your fine dic-
tionaries,
Nor what name God Almighty calls
them by
When their food's ready and He sends
them south ;

But our folk call them syle, and nought
but syle,
And when they're grown, why then
we call them herring.

I tell you, Sir, the water is as full
Of them as pastures be of blades of
grass;
You'll draw a score out in a landing
net,
And none of them be longer than a pin.

"Syle! ay, indeed, we should be badly
off,
I reckon, and so would God Almighty's
gulls,"

He grumbled on in his quaint piety,
"And all his other birds, if He should
say

I will not drive my syle into the south;
The fisher folk may do without my syle,
And do without the shoals of fish it
draws

To follow and feed on it."

This said, we made
Our peace with him by means of two
small coins,

And down we ran and lay upon the reef,
And saw the swimming infants, emer-
ald green,

In separate shoals, the scarcely turning
ebb

Bringing them in; while sleek, and not
intent

On chase, but taking that which came
to hand,

The full-fed mackerel and the gurnet
swam

Between; and settling on the polished
sea,

A thousand snow-white gulls sat lov-
ingly

In social rings, and twittered while they
fed.

The village dogs and ours, elate and
brave,

Lay looking over, barking at the fish;
Fast, fast the silver creatures took the
bait,

And when they heaved and floundered
on the rock,

In beauteous misery, a sudden pat
Some shaggy pup would deal, then
back away,

At distance eye them with sagacious
doubt,
And shrink half frightened from the slip-
pery things.

And so we lay from ebb-tide, till the flow
Rose high enough to drive us from the
reef;

The fisher lads went home across the
sand;

We climbed the cliff, and sat an hour
or more,

Talking and looking down. It was not
talk

Of much significance, except for this —
That we had more in common than of
old,

For both were tired, I with overwork,
He with inaction; I was glad at heart
To rest, and he was glad to have an ear
That he could grumble to, and half in
jest

Rail at entails, deplore the fate of heirs,
And the misfortune of a good estate —
Misfortune that was sure to pull him
down,

Make him a dreamy, selfish, useless
man:

Indeed he felt himself deteriorate
Already. Thereupon he sent down
showers

Of clattering stones, to emphasize his
words,

And leap the cliffs and tumble noisily
Into the seething wave. And as for
me,

I railed at him and at ingratitude,
While rifling of the basket he had slung
Across his shoulders; then with right
good will

We fell to work, and feasted like the
gods,

Like laborers, or like eager workhouse
folk

At Yuletide dinner; or, to say the whole
At once, like tired, hungry, healthy
youth,

Until the meal being o'er, the tilted
flask

Drained of its latest drop, the meat and
bread

And ruddy cherries eaten, and the dogs
Mumbling the bones, this elder brother
of mine —

This man, that never felt an ache or pain
In his broad, well-knit frame, and never
knew

The trouble of an unforgiven grudge,
The sting of a regretted meanness, nor
The desperate struggle of the unen-
dowed

For place and for possession — he began
To sing a rhyme that he himself had
wrought ;

Sending it out with cogitative pause,
As if the scene where he had shaped it
first

Had rolled it back on him, and meet-
ing it

Thus unaware, he was of doubtful mind
Whether his dignity it well beseeemed
To sing of pretty maiden :

Goldilocks sat on the grass,
Tying up of posies rare ;
Hardly could a sunbeam pass
Through the cloud that was her hair.
Purple orchis lasteth long,
Primrose flowers are pale and clear ;
O the maiden sang a song
It would do you good to hear !

Sad before her leaned the boy,
"Goldilocks that I love well,
Happy creature fair and coy,
Think o' me, Sweet Amabel."
Goldilocks she shook apart,
Looked with doubtful, doubtful eyes ;
Like a blossom on her heart
Opened out her first surprise.

As a gloriole sign o' grace,
Goldilocks, ah, fall and flow
On the blooming, childlike face,
Dimple, dimple, come and go.
Give her time ; on grass and sky
Let her gaze if she be fain :
As they looked ere he drew nigh,
They will never look again.

Ah ! the playtime she has known,
While her goldilocks grew long,
Is it like a nestling flown,
Childhood over like a song ?
Yes, the boy may clear his brow,
Though she thinks to say him nay,
When she sighs, "I cannot now —
Come again some other day."

"Hold there !" he cried, half angry
with himself ;

"That ending goes amiss : " then
turned again

To the old argument that we had held —
"Now look you !" said my brother,
"you may talk

Till, weary of the talk, I answer 'Ay,
There's reason in your words ; ' and
you may talk

Till I go on to say, 'This should be so ; '
And you may talk till I shall further own
'It is so ; yes, I am a lucky dog ! '

Yet not the less shall I next morning
wake,

And with a natural and fervent sigh,
Such as you never heaved, I shall ex-
claim

'What an unlucky dog I am ! ' " And
here

He broke into a laugh. "But as for
you —

You ! on all hands you have the best
of me ;

Men have not robbed you of your birth-
right — work,

Nor ravaged in old days a peaceful field,
Nor wedded heiresses against their will,
Nor sinned, nor slaved, nor stooped,
nor overreached,

That you might drone a useless life
away

'Mid half a score of bleak and barren
farms

And half a dozen bogs."

"O rare !" I cried ;
"His wrongs go nigh to make him
eloquent :

Now we behold how far bad actions
reach !

Because five hundred years ago a
Knight

Drove geese and beeves out from a
franklin's yard ;

Because three hundred years ago a
squire —

Against her will, and for her fair estate—
Married a very ugly, red-haired maid,
The blest inheritor of all their pelf,
While in the full enjoyment of the same,
Sighs on his own confession every day.
He cracks no egg without a moral sigh,
Nor eats of beef but thinking on that
wrong ;

Then, yet the more to be revenged on
 them,
 And shame their ancient pride, if they
 should know,
 Works hard as any horse for his degree,
 And takes to writing verses.”
 “Ay,” he said,
 Half laughing at himself. “Yet you
 and I,
 But for those tresses which enrich us
 yet
 With somewhat of the hue that partial
 fame
 Calls auburn when it shines on heads
 of heirs,
 But when it flames round brows of
 younger sons,
 Just red — mere red ; why, but for this,
 I say,
 And-but for selfish getting of the land,
 And beggarly entailing it, we two,
 To-day well fed, well grown, well
 dressed, well read,
 We might have been two horny-handed
 boors —
 Lean, clumsy, ignorant, and ragged
 boors —
 Planning for moonlight nights a poach-
 ing scheme,
 Or soiling our dull souls and consciences
 With plans for pilfering a cottage roost.

“What, chorus! are you dumb? you
 should have cried,
 ‘So good comes out of evil;’” and
 with that,
 As if all pauses it was natural
 To seize for songs, his voice broke out
 again :

Coo, dove, to thy married mate —
 She has two warm eggs in her nest :
 Tell her the hours are few to wait
 Ere life shall dawn on their rest ;
 And thy young shall peck at the shells,
 elate
 With a dream of her brooding breast.

Coo, dove, for she counts the hours,
 Her fair wings ache for flight :
 By day the apple has grown in the
 flowers,

And the moon has grown by night,
 And the white drift settled from haw-
 thorn bowers,
 Yet they will not seek the light.

Coo, dove ; but what of the sky ?
 And what if the storm-wind swell,
 And the reeling branch come down from
 on high
 To the grass where daisies dwell,
 And the brood beloved should with them
 lie
 Or ever they break the shell ?

Coo, dove ; and yet black clouds lower,
 Like fate, on the far-off sea :
 Thunder and wind they bear to thy
 bower,
 As on wings of destiny.
 Ah, what if they break in an evil hour,
 As they broke over mine and me ?

What next? — we started like to girls,
 for lo!
 The creaking voice, more harsh than
 rusty crane,
 Of one who stooped behind us, cried
 aloud,
 “Good lack ! how sweet the gentleman
 does sing —
 So loud and sweet, ’tis like to split his
 throat.
 Why, Mike’s a child to him, a two-
 years child —
 A Chrisom child.”

“Who’s Mike?” my brother growled
 A little roughly. Quoth the fisher-
 man —
 “Mike, Sir? he’s just a fisher lad, no
 more ;
 But he can sing, when he takes on to
 sing,
 So loud there’s not a sparrow in the spire
 But needs must hear. Sir, if I might
 make bold,
 I’d ask what song that was you sung.
 My mate,
 As we were shoving off the mackerel
 boats,
 Said he, ‘I’ll wager that’s the sort o’
 song
 They kept their hearts up with in the
 Crimea.’”

"There, fisherman," quoth I, "he showed his wit,
Your mate; he marked the sound of
savage war —
Gunpowder, groans, hot-shot, and
bursting shells,
And 'murderous messages,' delivered
by
Spent balls that break the heads of
dreaming men."

"Ay, ay, Sir!" quoth the fisherman.
"Have done!"
My brother. And I — "The gift be-
longs to few
Of sending farther than the words can
reach
Their spirit and expression;" still
"Have done!"
He cried; and then "I rolled the rub-
bish out
More loudly than the meaning war-
ranted,
To air my lungs — I thought not on
the words."

Then said the fisherman, who missed
the point,
"So Mike rolls out the psalm; you'll
hear him, Sir,
Please God you live till Sunday."

"Even so:
And you, too, fisherman; for here, they
say,
You all are church-goers."

"Surely, Sir," quoth he,
Took off his hat, and stroked his old
white head
And wrinkled face; then sitting by us
said,
As one that utters with a quiet mind
Unchallenged truth — "'Tis lucky for
the boats."

The boats! 'tis lucky for the boats!
Our eyes
Were drawn to him as either fain would
say,
What! do they send the psalm up in
the spire
And pray because 'tis lucky for the
boats?

But he, the brown old man, the wrinkled
man,
That all his life had been a church-
goer,
Familiar with celestial cadences,
Informed of all he could receive, and
sure
Of all he understood — he sat content,
And we kept silence. In his reverend
face
There was a simpleness we could not
sound;
Much truth had passed him overhead;
some error
He had trod under foot; — God comfort
him!
He could not learn of us, for we were
young
And he was old, and so we gave it up;
And the sun went into the west, and
down
Upon the water stooped an orange
cloud,
And the pale milky reaches flushed, as
glad
To wear its colors; and the sultry air
Went out to sea, and puffed the sails
of ships
With thymy wafts, the breath of trod-
den grass:
It took moreover music, for across
The heather belt and over pasture land
Came the sweet monotone of one slow
bell,
And parted time into divisions rare,
Whereof each morsel brought its own
delight.

"They ring for service," quoth the
fisherman;
"Our parson preaches in the church
to-night."

"And do the people go?" my brother
asked.

"Ay, Sir; they count it mean to stay
away,
He takes it so to heart. He's a rare
man,
Our parson; half a head above us all."

"That's a great gift, and notable,"
said I.

"Ay, Sir; and when he was a younger man

He went out in the life-boat very oft,
Before the 'Grace of Sunderland' was wrecked.

He's never been his own man since that hour;

For there were thirty men aboard of her,
Anigh as close as you are now to me,
And ne'er a one was saved.

They're lying now,
With two small children, in a row: the church

And yard are full of seamen's graves,
and few

Have any names.

She bumped upon the reef;
Our parson, my young son, and several more

Were lashed together with a two-inch rope,

And crept along to her; their mates ashore

Ready to haul them in. The gale was high,

The sea was all a boiling, seething froth,
And God Almighty's guns were going off,

And the land trembled.

"When she took the ground,
She went to pieces like a lock of hay
Tossed from a pitchfork. Ere it came to that,

The captain reeled on deck with two small things,

One in each arm—his little lad and lass.

Their hair was long, and blew before his face,

Or else we thought he had been saved;
he fell,

But held them fast. The crew, poor luckless souls!

The breakers licked them off; and some were crushed,

Some swallowed in the yeast, some flung up dead,

The dear breath beaten out of them: not one

Jumped from the wreck upon the reef to catch

The hands that strained to reach, but tumbled back

With eyes wide open. But the captain lay

And clung—the only man alive. They prayed—

'For God's sake, captain, throw the children here!'

'Throw them!' our parson cried; and then she struck:

And he threw one, a pretty two-years child;

But the gale dashed him on the slippery verge,

And down he went. They say they heard him cry.

"Then he rose up and took the other one,

And all our men reached out their hungry arms,

And cried out, 'Throw her!' and he did:

He threw her right against the parson's breast,

And all at once a sea broke over them,
And they that saw it from the shore

have said
It struck the wreck, and piecemeal scattered it,

Just as a woman might the lump of salt

That 'twixt her hands into the kneading-pan

She breaks and crumbles on her rising bread.

"We hauled our men in: two of them were dead—

The sea had beaten them, their heads hung down;

Our parson's arms were empty, for the wave

Had torn away the pretty, pretty lamb;
We often see him stand beside her

grave:
But 'twas no fault of his, no fault of his.

"I ask your pardon, Sirs; I prate and prate,

And never have I said what brought me here.

Sirs, if you want a boat to-morrow morn,

I'm bold to say there's ne'er a boat like mine."

"Ay, that was what we wanted," we replied;
 "A boat, his boat;" and off he went,
 well pleased.

We, too, rose up (the crimson in the sky
 Flushing our faces), and went sauntering on,
 And thought to reach our lodging, by the cliff.
 And up and down among the heather beds,
 And up and down between the sheaves, we sped,
 Doubling and winding; for a long ravine
 Ran up into the land and cut us off,
 Pushing out slippery ledges for the birds,
 And rent with many a crevice, where the wind
 Had laid up drifts of empty egg-shells, swept
 From the bare berths of gulls and guillemots.

So as it chanced we lighted on a path
 That led into a nutwood; and our talk
 Was louder than beseemed, if we had known,
 With argument and laughter; for the path,
 As we sped onward, took a sudden turn
 Abrupt, and we came out on churchyard grass,
 And close upon a porch, and face to face
 With those within, and with the thirty graves.
 We heard the voice of one who preached within,
 And stopped. "Come on," my brother whispered me;
 "It were more decent that we enter now;
 Come on! we'll hear this rare old demigod:
 I like strong men and large; I like grey heads,
 And grand gruff voices, hoarse though this may be
 With shouting in the storm."

It was not hoarse,
 The voice that preached to those few fishermen,
 And women, nursing mothers with the babes
 Hushed on their breasts; and yet it held them not:
 Their drowsy eyes were drawn to look at us,
 Till, having leaned our rods against the wall,
 And left the dogs at watch, we entered, sat,
 And were apprised that, though he saw us not,
 The parson knew that he had lost the eyes
 And ears of those before him, for he made
 A pause—a long dead pause—and dropped his arms,
 And stood awaiting, till I felt the red
 Mount to my brow.

And a soft fluttering stir
 Passed over all, and every mother hushed
 The babe beneath her shawl, and he turned round
 And met our eyes, unused to diffidence,
 But diffident of his; then with a sigh
 Fronted the folk, lifted his grand grey head,
 And said, as one that pondered now the words
 He had been preaching on with new surprise,
 And found fresh marvel in their sound,
 "Behold!
 Behold!" saith He, "I stand at the door and knock."

Then said the parson: "What! and shall He wait,
 And must He wait, not only till we say,
 'Good Lord, the house is clean, the hearth is swept,
 The children sleep, the mackerel-boats are in,
 And all the nets are mended; therefore I
 Will slowly to the door and open it;'—
 But must He also wait where still, behold!

He stands and knocks, while we do say,
 'Good Lord,
 The gentlefolk are come to worship
 here,
 And I will up and open to Thee soon;
 But first I pray a little longer wait,
 For I am taken up with them; my eyes
 Must needs regard the fashion of their
 clothes,
 And count the gains I think to make
 by them;
 Forsooth, they are of much account,
 good Lord!
 Therefore have patience with me —
 wait, dear Lord!
 Or come again?'

"What! must He wait for THIS —
 For this? Ay, He doth wait for this,
 and still,
 Waiting for this, He, patient, railleth
 not;
 Waiting for this, e'en this He saith,
 'Behold!
 I stand at the door and knock.'

"O patient hand!
 Knocking and waiting — knocking in
 the night
 When work is done! I charge you, by
 the sea
 Whereby you fill your children's
 mouths, and by
 The might of Him that made it — fish-
 ermen!
 I charge you, mothers! by the mother's
 milk
 He drew, and by His Father, God
 over all,
 Blessed for ever, that ye answer Him!
 Open the door with shame, if ye have
 sinned;
 If ye be sorry, open it with sighs.
 Albeit the place be bare for poverty,
 And comfortless for lack of plenishing,
 Be not abashed for that, but open it,
 And take Him in that comes to sup
 with thee;
 'Behold!' He saith, 'I stand at the
 door and knock.'

"Now, hear me: there be troubles in
 this world

That no man can escape, and there is
 one
 That lieth hard and heavy on my soul,
 Concerning that which is to come: —

I say
 As a man that knows what earthly
 trouble means,
 I will not bear this ONE — I cannot
 bear

This ONE — I cannot bear the weight
 of you —

You — every one of you, body and soul;
 You, with the care you suffer, and the
 loss

That you sustain; you, with the grow-
 ing up

To peril, maybe with the growing old
 To want, unless before I stand with
 you

At the great white throne, I may be
 free of all,

And utter to the full what shall dis-
 charge

Mine obligation: nay, I will not wait
 A day, for every time the black clouds
 rise,

And the gale freshens, still I search
 my soul

To find if there be aught that can per-
 suade

To good, or aught forsooth that can
 beguile

From evil, that I (miserable man!
 If that be so) have left unsaid, undone.

"So that when any risen from sunken
 wrecks,

Or rolled in by the billows to the edge
 Of the everlasting strand, what time
 the sea

Gives up her dead, shall meet me, they
 may say

Never, 'Old man, you told us not of
 this;

You left us fisher-lads that had to toil
 Ever in danger of the secret stab
 Of rocks, far deadlier than the dagger;
 winds

Of breath more murderous than the
 cannon's; waves

Mighty to rock us to our death; and
 gulfs

Ready beneath to suck and swallow us
 in:

This crime be on your head; and as
for us —

What shall we do?" but rather — nay,
not so,

I will not think it; I will leave the
dead,

Appealing but to life: I am afraid
Of you, but not so much if you have
sinned

As for the doubt if sin shall be forgiven.
The day was, I have been afraid of
pride —

Hard man's hard pride; but now I am
afraid

Of man's humility. I counsel you,
By the great God's great humbleness,
and by

His pity, be not humble over-much.
See! I will show at whose unopened
doors

He stands and knocks, that you may
never say,

'I am too mean, too ignorant, too lost;
He knocks at other doors, but not at
mine.'

"See here! it is the night! it is the
night!

And snow lies thickly, white untrodden
snow,

And the wan moon upon a casement
shines —

A casement crusted o'er with frosty
leaves,

That make her rayless bright along the
floor.

A woman sits, with hands upon her
knees,

Poor tired soul! and she has nought to
do,

For there is neither fire nor candle
light:

The driftwood ash lies cold upon her
hearth;

The rushlight flickered down an hour
ago;

Her children wail a little in their sleep
For cold and hunger; and, as if that
sound

Was not enough, another comes to her,
Over God's undefiled snow — a song —

Nay, never hang your heads — I say, a
song.

"And doth she curse the alehouse,
and the sots

That drink the night out and their earn-
ings there,

And drink their manly strength and
courage down,

And drink away the little children's
bread,

And starve her, starving by the self-
same act

Her tender suckling, that with piteous
eyes

Looks in her face, till scarcely she has
heart

To work and earn the scanty bit and
drop

That feed the others?

"Does she curse the song?

I think not, fishermen; I have not
heard

Such women curse. God's curse is
curse enough.

To-morrow she will say a bitter thing,
Pulling her sleeve down lest the bruises
show —

A bitter thing, but meant for an ex-
cuse —

'My master is not worse than many
men:'

But now, ay, now she sitteth dumb and
still;

No food, no comfort, cold and poverty
Bearing her down.

"My heart is sore for her;

How long, how long? When troubles
come of God,

When men are frozen out of work,
when wives

Are sick, when working fathers fail and
die,

When boats go down at sea — then
naught behooves

Like patience; but for troubles wrought
of men

Patience is hard — I tell you it is hard.

"O thou poor soul! it is the night —
the night;

Against thy door drifts up the silent
snow,

Blocking thy threshold: 'Fall,' thou
sayest, 'fall, fall,

Cold snow, and lie and be trod under-foot.
 Am not I fallen? wake up and pipe,
 O wind,
 Dull wind, and beat and bluster at my door:
 Merciful wind, sing me a hoarse rough song,
 For there is other music made to-night
 That I would fain not hear. Wake,
 thou still sea,
 Heavily plunge. Shoot on, white waterfall.
 O, I could long like thy cold icicles
 Freeze, freeze, and hang upon the frosty clift
 And not complain, so I might melt at last
 In the warm summer sun, as thou wilt do!

“But woe is me! I think there is no sun;
 My sun is sunken, and the night grows dark:
 None care for me. The children cry for bread,
 And I have none, and naught can comfort me;
 Even if the heavens were free to such as I,
 It were not much, for death is long to wait,
 And heaven is far to go!’

“And speak’st thou thus,
 Despairing of the sun that sets to thee,
 And of the earthly love that wanes to thee,
 And of the heaven that lieth far from thee?
 Peace, peace, fond fool! One draweth near thy door
 Whose footsteps leave no print across the snow:
 Thy sun has risen with comfort in his face,
 The smile of heaven, to warm thy frozen heart
 And bless with saintly hand. What! is it long
 To wait, and far to go? Thou shalt not go;

Behold, across the snow to thee He comes,
 Thy heaven descends; and is it long to wait?
 Thou shalt not wait: ‘This night, this night,’ He saith,
 ‘I stand at the door and knock.’

“It is enough — can such an one be here —
 Yea, here? O God forgive you, fishermen!
 One! is there only one? But do thou know,
 O woman pale for want, if thou art here,
 That on thy lot much thought is spent in heaven;
 And, coveting the heart a hard man broke,
 One standeth patient, watching in the night,
 And waiting in the day-time.

“What shall be
 If thou wilt answer? He will smile on thee;
 One smile of His shall be enough to heal
 The wound of man’s neglect; and He will sigh,
 Pitying the trouble which that sigh shall cure;
 And He will speak — speak in the desolate night,
 In the dark night: ‘For me a thorny crown
 Men wove, and nails were driven in my hands
 And feet: there was an earthquake, and I died;
 I died, and am alive for evermore.

“‘I died for thee; for thee I am alive,
 And my humanity doth mourn for thee,
 For thou art mine; and all thy little ones,
 They, too, are mine, are mine. Behold, the house
 Is dark, but there is brightness where the sons
 Of God are singing; and, behold, the heart

Is troubled: yet the nations walk in
white;

They have forgotten how to weep; and
thou

Shalt also come, and I will foster thee
And satisfy thy soul; and thou shalt
warm

Thy trembling life beneath the smile of
God.

A little while — it is a little while —
A little while, and I will comfort thee;
I go away, but I will come again.'

"But hear me yet. There was a poor
old man

Who sat and listened to the raging sea,
And heard it thunder, lunging at the
cliffs

As like to tear them down. He lay at
night;

And 'Lord have mercy on the lads,'
said he,

'That sailed at noon, though they be
none of mine!

For when the gale gets up, and when
the wind

Flings at the window, when it beats
the roof,

And lulls, and stops, and rouses up
again,

And cuts the crest clean off the plung-
ing wave,

And scatters it like feathers up the field,
Why, then I think of my two lads: my
lads

That would have worked and never let
me want,

And never let me take the parish pay.

No, none of mine; my lads were
drowned at sea —

My two — before the most of these
were born.

I know how sharp that cuts, since my
poor wife

Walked up and down, and still walked
up and down,

And I walked after, and one could not
hear

A word the other said, for wind and
sea

That raged and beat and thundered in
the night —

The awfulest, the longest, lightest
night

That ever parents had to spend — a
moon

That shone like daylight on the break-
ing wave.

Ah me! and other men have lost their
lads,

And other women wiped their poor
dead mouths,

And got them home and dried them in
the house,

And seen the driftwood lie along the
coast

That was a tidy boat but one day back,
And seen next tide the neighbors gather
it

To lay it on their fires.

Ay, I was strong
And able-bodied — loved my work; —
but now

I am a useless hull: 'tis time I sunk;
I am in all men's way; I trouble them;

I am a trouble to myself: but yet
I feel for mariners of stormy nights,

And feel for wives that watch ashore.

Ay, ay!

If I had learning I would pray the Lord
To bring them in: but I'm no scholar,

no;
Book-learning is a world too hard for
me:

But I make bold to say, O Lord, good
Lord,

I am a broken-down poor man, a fool
To speak to Thee: but in the Book

'tis writ,

As I hear say from others that can read,
How, when Thou camest, Thou didst

love the sea,
And live with fisherfolk, whereby 'tis

sure
Thou knowest all the peril they go

through,
And all their trouble.

As for me, good Lord,
I have no boat; I am too old, too old —

My lads are drowned; I buried my poor
wife;

My little lasses died so long ago
That mostly I forget what they were

like.
Thou knowest, Lord; they were such
little ones

I know they went to thee, but I forget
Their faces, though I missed them sore.

O Lord,
 I was a strong man ; I have drawn good
 food
 And made good money out of Thy
 great sea :
 But yet I cried for them at nights ; and
 now,
 Although I be so old, I miss my lads,
 And there be many folk this stormy
 night
 Heavy with fear for theirs. Merciful
 Lord,
 Comfort them ; save their honest boys,
 their pride,
 And let them hear next ebb the bless-
 edest,
 Best sound — the boat keels grating on
 the sand.

“ ‘ I cannot pray with finer words : I
 know
 Nothing ; I have no learning, cannot
 learn —
 Too old, too old. They say I want for
 naught,
 I have the parish pay ; but I am dull
 Of hearing, and the fire scarce warms
 me through.
 God save me — I have been a sinful
 man —
 And save the lives of them that still
 can work,
 For they are good to me ; ay, good to
 me.
 But, Lord, I am a trouble ! and I sit,
 And I am lonesome, and the nights
 are few
 That any think to come and draw a
 chair,
 And sit in my poor place and talk
 awhile.
 Why should they come, forsooth ? Only
 the wind
 Knocks at my door, O long and loud it
 knocks,
 The only thing God made that has a
 mind
 To enter in.’ ”

“ Yea, thus the old man spake ;
 These were the last words of his aged
 mouth —

BUT ONE DID KNOCK. One came to
 sup with him,
 That humble, weak old man ; knocked
 at his door
 In the rough pauses of the laboring
 wind.
 I tell you that One knocked while it
 was dark,
 Save where their foaming passion had
 made white
 Those livid seething billows. What
 He said
 In that poor place where He did talk
 awhile
 I cannot tell ; but this I am assured,
 That when the neighbors came the
 morrow morn,
 What time the wind had bated, and
 the sun
 Shone on the old man’s floor, they saw
 the smile
 He passed away in, and they said, ‘ He
 looks
 As he had woke and seen the face of
 Christ,
 And with that rapturous smile held out
 his arms
 To come to Him ! ’

“ Can such an one be here,
 So old, so weak, so ignorant, so frail ?
 The Lord be good to thee, thou poor
 old man ;
 It would be hard with thee if heaven
 were shut
 To such as have not learning ! Nay,
 nay, nay,
 He condescends to them of low estate ;
 To such as are despised He cometh
 down,
 Stands at the door and knocks.

“ Yet bear with me.
 I have a message ; I have more to say.
 Shall sorrow win His pity, and not sin —
 That burden ten times heavier to be
 borne ?
 What think you ? Shall the virtuous
 have His care
 Alone ? O virtuous women, think not
 scorn,
 For you may lift your faces every-
 where ;

And now that it grows dusk, and I can
see

None though they front me straight, I
fain would tell

A certain thing to you. I say to *you* ;
And if it doth concern you, as methinks
It doth, then surely it concerneth all.

I say that there was once — I say not
here —

I say that there was once a castaway,
And she was weeping, weeping bitterly ;
Kneeling, and crying with a heart-sick
cry

That choked itself in sobs — ‘O my
good name!

O my good name!’ And none did
hear her cry!

Nay ; and it lightened, and the storm-
bolts fell,

And the rain splashed upon the roof,
and still

She, storm-tost as the storming ele-
ments —

She cried with an exceeding bitter cry,
‘O my good name!’ And then the
thunder-cloud

Stooped low and burst in darkness over-
head,

And rolled, and rocked her on her
knees, and shook

The frail foundations of her dwelling-
place.

But she — if any neighbor had come in
(None did): if any neighbors had come
in,

They might have seen her crying on
her knees,

And sobbing, ‘Lost, lost, lost!’ beat-
ing her breast —

Her breast for ever pricked with cruel
thorns,

The wounds whereof could neither balm
assuage

Nor any patience heal — beating her
brow,

Which ached, it had been bent so long
to hide

From level eyes, whose meaning was
contempt.

“O ye good women, it is hard to
leave

The paths of virtue, and return again.

What if this sinner wept, and none of
you

Comforted her? And what if she did
strive

To mend, and none of you believed her
strife,

Nor looked upon her? Mark, I do not
say,

Though it was hard, you therefore were
to blame

That she had aught against you, though
your feet

Never drew near her door. But I be-
seech

Your patience. Once in old Jerusalem
A woman kneeled at consecrated feet,

Kissed them, and washed them with
her tears.

What then?

I think that yet our Lord is pitiful :
I think I see the castaway e’en now!

And she is not alone : the heavy rain
Splashes without, and sullen thunder

rolls,
But she is lying at the sacred feet

Of One transfigured.

“And her tears flow down,
Down to her lips — her lips that kiss

the print
Of nails ; and love is like to break her

heart!
Love and repentance — for it still doth

work
Sore in her soul to think, to think that

she,
Even she, did pierce the sacred, sacred

feet,
And bruise the thorn-crowned head.

“O Lord, our Lord,
How great is Thy compassion! Come,

good Lord,
For we will open. Come this night,

good Lord ;
Stand at the door and knock.

“And is this all?
Trouble, old age and simpleness, and

sin —
This all? It might be all some other

night ;
But this night, if a voice said, ‘Give

account

Whom hast thou with thee?' then
 must I reply,
 'Young manhood have I, beautiful
 youth and strength,
 Rich with all treasure drawn up from
 the crypt
 Where lies the learning of the ancient
 world —
 Brave with all thoughts that poets fling
 upon
 The strand of life, as driftweed after
 storms:
 Doubtless familiar with Thy mountain
 heads,
 And the dread purity of Alpine snows,
 Doubtless familiar with Thy works con-
 cealed
 For ages from mankind — outlying
 worlds,
 And many moonèd spheres — and Thy
 great store
 Of stars, more thick than mealy dust
 which here
 Powders the pale leaves of auriculas.

“ ‘This do I know, but, Lord, I know
 not more.

“ ‘Not more concerning them — con-
 cerning Thee,
 I know Thy bounty; where Thou giv-
 est much
 Standing without, if any call Thee in
 Thou givest more.’ Speak, then, O
 rich and strong:
 Open, O happy young, ere yet the
 hand
 Of Him that knocks, wearied at last,
 forbear;
 The patient foot its thankless quest re-
 frain,
 The wounded heart for evermore with-
 draw.”

I have heard many speak, but this one
 man —
 So anxious not to go to heaven alone —
 This one man I remember, and his
 look,
 Till twilight overshadowed him. He
 ceased,
 And out in darkness with the fisher
 folk

We passed and stumbled over mounds
 of moss,
 And heard, but did not see, the passing
 beck.
 Ah, graceless heart, would that it could
 regain
 From the dim storehouse of sensations
 past
 The impress full of tender awe, that
 night,
 Which fell on me! It was as if the
 Christ
 Had been drawn down from heaven to
 track us home,
 And any of the footsteps following us
 Might have been His.



A WEDDING SONG.

COME up the broad river, the Thames,
 my Dane,

My Dane with the beautiful eyes!
 Thousands and thousands await thee
 full fain,

And talk of the wind and the skies.
 Fear not from folk and from country to
 part,

O, I swear it is wisely done;
 For (I said) I will bear me by thee,
 sweetheart,
 As becometh my father's son.

Great London was shouting as I went
 down.

“She is worthy,” I said, “of this;
 What shall I give who have promised
 a crown?

O, first I will give her a kiss.”
 So I kissed her and brought her, my
 Dane, my Dane,

Through the waving wonderful
 crowd:
 Thousands and thousands, they shouted
 amain,
 Like mighty thunders and loud.

And they said, “He is young, the lad
 we love,

The heir of the Isles is young:
 How we deem of his mother, and one
 gone above,
 Can neither be said nor sung.

He brings us a pledge — he will do his
 part
 With the best of his race and
 name ; ” —
 And I will, for I look to live, sweet-
 heart,
 As may suit with my mother's fame.

THE FOUR BRIDGES.

I LOVE this grey old church, the low,
 long nave,
 The ivied chancel and the slender
 spire ;
 No less its shadow on each heaving
 grave,
 With growing osier bound, or living
 briar ;
 I love those yew-tree trunks, where
 stand arrayed
 So many deep-cut names of youth and
 maid.

A simple custom this — I love it well —
 A carved betrothal and a pledge of
 truth ;
 How many an eve, their linked names
 to spell,
 Beneath the yew-trees sat our village
 youth !
 When work was over, and the new-cut
 hay
 Sent wafts of balm from meadows where
 it lay.

Ah ! many an eve, while I was yet a
 boy,
 Some village hind has beckoned me
 aside,
 And sought mine aid, with shy and
 awkward joy,
 To carve the letters of his rustic bide,
 And make them clear to read as graven
 stone,
 Deep in the yew-tree's trunk beside
 his own.

For none could carve like me, and here
 they stand,
 Fathers and mothers of the present
 race ;

And underscored by some less practised
 hand,
 That fain the story of its line would
 trace,
 With children's names, and number,
 and the day
 When any called to God have passed
 away.

I look upon them, and I turn aside,
 As oft when carving them I did ere-
 while ;
 And there I see those wooden bridges
 wide
 That cross the marshy hollow ; there
 the stile
 In reeds imbedded, and the swelling
 down,
 And the white road toward the distant
 town.

But those old bridges claim another
 look.
 Our brattling river tumbles through
 the one ;
 The second spans a shallow, weedy
 brook ;
 Beneath the others, and beneath the
 sun,
 Lie two long stilly pools, and on their
 breasts
 Picture their wooden piles, encased in
 swallows' nests.

And round about them grows a fringe
 of reeds,
 And then a floating crown of lily
 flowers,
 And yet within small silver-budded
 weeds ;
 But each clear centre evermore em-
 bowers
 A deeper sky, where, stooping, you
 may see
 The little minnows darting restlessly.

My heart is bitter, lilies, at your sweet ;
 Why did the dewdrop fringe your
 chalices ?
 Why in your beauty are you thus com-
 plete,
 You silver ships — you floating pal-
 aces ?

O! if need be, you must allure man's
eye,
Yet wherefore blossom here? O why?
O why?

O! O! the world is wide, you lily
flowers,
It hath warm forests, cleft by stilly
pools,
Where every night bathe crowds of
stars; and bowers
Of spicery hang over. Sweet air cools
And shakes the lilies among those stars
that lie:
Why are not ye content to reign there?
Why?

That chain of bridges, it were hard to
tell
How it is linked with all my early joy.
There was a little foot that I loved well,
It danced across them when I was a
boy;
There was a careless voice that used to
sing;
There was a child, a sweet and happy
thing.

Oft through that matted wood of oak
and birch
She came from yonder house upon
the hill;
She crossed the wooden bridges to the
church,
And watched, with village girls, my
boasted skill:
But loved to watch the floating lilies
best,
Or linger, peering in a swallow's nest;

Linger and linger, with her wistful
eyes
Drawn to the lily-buds that lay so
white
And soft on crimson water; for the
skies
Would crimson, and the little cloud-
lets bright
Would all be flung among the flowers
sheer down,
To flush the spaces of their clustering
crown.

Till the green rushes — O, so glossy
green —

The rushes, they would whisper,
rustle, shake;
And forth on floating gauze, no jew-
elled queen
So rich, the green-eyed dragon-flies
would break,
And hover on the flowers — aërial
things,
With little rainbows flickering on their
wings.

Ah! my heart dear! the polished pools
lie still,
Like lanes of water reddened by the
west,
Till, swooping down from yon o'er-
hanging hill,
The bold marsh harrier wets her
tawny breast;
We scared her oft in childhood from
her prey,
And the old eager thoughts rise fresh
as yesterday.

To yonder copse by moonlight I did go,
In luxury of mischief, half afraid,
To steal the great owl's brood, her
downy snow,
Her screaming imps to seize, the
while she preyed
With yellow, cruel eyes, whose radiant
glare,
Fell with their mother rage, I might
not dare.

Panting I lay till her great fanning wings
Troubled the dreams of rock-doves,
slumbering nigh,
And she and her fierce mate, like evil
things,
Skimmed the dusk fields; then rising,
with a cry
Of fear, joy, triumph, darted on my
prey,
And tore it from the nest and fled away.

But afterward, belated in the wood,
I saw her moping on the rifed tree,
And my heart smote me for her, while
I stood
Awakened from my careless reverie;

So white she looked, with moonlight
 round her shed,
 So motherlike she drooped and hung
 her head.

O that mine eyes would cheat me! I
 behold
 The godwits running by the water
 edge,
 The mossy bridges mirrored as of old;
 The little curlews creeping from the
 sedge,
 But not the little foot so gayly light:
 O that mine eyes would cheat me, that
 I might! —

Would cheat me! I behold the gable-
 ends —
 Those purple pigeons clustering on
 the cote;
 The lane with maples overhung, that
 bends
 Toward her dwelling; the dry grassy
 moat,
 Thick mullions, diamond-latticed,
 mossed and grey,
 And walls banked up with laurel and
 with bay.

And up behind them yellow fields of
 corn,
 And still ascending countless firry
 spires,
 Dry slopes of hills uncultured, bare,
 forlorn,
 And green in rocky clefts with whins
 and briars;
 Then rich cloud masses dyed the vio-
 let's hue,
 With orange sunbeams dropping swiftly
 through.

Ay, I behold all this full easily;
 My soul is jealous of my happier eyes,
 And manhood envies youth. Ah,
 strange to see,
 By looking merely, orange-flooded
 skies;
 Nay, any dew-drop that may near me
 shine:
 But never more the face of Eglantine!

She was my one companion, being
 herself
 The jewel and adornment of my days,
 My life's completeness. O, a smiling elf,
 That I do but disparage with my
 praise —
 My playmate; and I loved her dearly
 and long,
 And she loved me, as the tender love
 the strong.

Ay, but she grew, till on a time there
 came
 A sudden restless yearning to my
 heart;
 And as we went a-nesting, all for shame
 And shyness, I did hold my peace,
 and start;
 Content departed, comfort shut me out,
 And there was nothing left to talk about.

She had but sixteen years, and as for me,
 Four added made my life. This
 pretty bird,
 This fairy bird that I had cherished —
 she,
 Content, had sung, while I, con-
 tented, heard.
 The song had ceased; the bird, with
 nature's art,
 Had brought a thorn and set it in my
 heart.

The restless birth of love my soul op-
 prest;
 I longed and wrestled for a tranquil
 day,
 And warred with that disquiet in my
 breast
 As one who knows there is a better
 way;
 But, turned against myself, I still in vain
 Looked for the ancient calm to come
 again.

My tired soul could to itself confess
 That she deserved a wiser love than
 mine;
 To love more truly were to love her less,
 And for this truth I still awoke to
 pine:
 I had a dim belief that it would be
 A better thing for her, a blessed thing
 for me.

Good hast Thou made them — comforters right sweet ;

Good hast Thou made the world, to mankind lent ;

Good are Thy dropping clouds that feed the wheat ;

Good are Thy stars above the firmament.

Take to Thee, take, Thy worship, Thy renown ;

The good which Thou hast made doth wear Thy crown.

For, O my God, Thy creatures are so frail,

Thy bountiful creation is so fair,

That, drawn before us like the temple veil,

It hides the Holy Place from thought and care,

Giving man's eyes instead its sweeping fold,

Rich as with cherub wings and apples wrought of gold,

Purple and blue and scarlet — shimmering bells

And rare pomegranates on its broidered rim,

Glorious with chain and fret work that the swell

Of incense shakes to music dreamy and dim,

Till on a day comes loss, that God makes gain,

And death and darkness rend the veil in twain.

* * * * *

Ah, sweetest ! my beloved ! each outward thing

Recalls my youth, and is instinct with thee ;

Brown wood-owls in the dusk, with noiseless wing,

Float from yon hanger to their haunted tree,

And hoot full softly. Listening, I regain

A flashing thought of thee with their remembered strain.

I will not pine — it is the careless brook,

These amber sunbeams slanting down the vale ;

It is the long tree-shadows, with their look

Of natural peace, that make my heart to fail :

The peace of nature — No, I will not pine —

But O the contrast 'twixt her face and mine !

And still I changed — I was a boy no more ;

My heart was large enough to hold my kind,

And all the world. As hath been oft before

With youth, I sought, but I could never find

Work hard enough to quiet my self-strife,

And use the strength of action-craving life.

She, too, was changed : her bountiful sweet eyes

Looked out full lovingly on all the world.

O tender as the deeps in yonder skies Their beaming ! but her rosebud lips

were curled

With the soft dimple of a musing smile, Which kept my gaze, but held me mute

the while.

A cast of bees, a slowly moving wain, The scent of bean-flowers wafted up

a dell,

Blue pigeons wheeling over fields of grain,

Or bleat of folded lamb, would please her well,

Or cooing of the early coted dove ; — She, sauntering, mused of these ; I, following, mused of love.

With her two lips, that one the other pressed

So poutingly with such a tranquil air, With her two eyes, that on my own

would rest

So dream-like, she denied my silent prayer,

Fronted unuttered words, and said them
 nay,
 And smiled down love till it had nought
 to say.

The words that through mine eyes
 would clearly shine
 Hovered and hovered on my lips in
 vain;
 If after pause I said but "Eglantine,"
 She raised to me her quiet eyelids
 twain,
 And looked me this reply — look calm,
 yet bland —
 "I shall not know, I will not under-
 stand."

Yet she did know my story — knew my
 life
 Was wrought to hers with bindings
 many and strong:
 That I, like Israel, served for a wife,
 And for the love I bare her thought
 not long,
 But only a few days, full quickly told,
 My seven years' service strict as his of
 old.

I must be brief: the twilight shadows
 grow,
 And steal the rose-bloom genial sum-
 mer sheds,
 And scented wafts of wind that come
 and go
 Have lifted dew from honeyed clover-
 heads;
 The seven stars shine out above the mill,
 The dark delightsome woods lie veiled
 and still.

Hush! hush! the nightingale begins
 to sing,
 And stops, as ill contented with her
 note;
 Then breaks from out the bush with
 hurried wing,
 Restless and passionate. She tunes
 her throat,
 Laments a while in wavering trills, and
 then
 Floods with a stream of sweetness all
 the glen.

The seven stars upon the nearest pool
 Lie trembling down betwixt the lily
 leaves,
 And move like glowworms; wafting
 breezes cool
 Come down along the water, and it
 heaves
 And bubbles in the sedge; while deep
 and wide
 The dim night settles on the country
 side.

I know this scene by heart. O! once
 before
 I saw the seven stars float to and fro,
 And stayed my hurried footsteps by the
 shore
 To mark the starry picture spread
 below:
 Its silence made the tumult in my breast
 More audible; its peace revealed my
 own unrest.

I paused, then hurried on; my heart
 beat quick;
 I crossed the bridges, reached the
 steep ascent,
 And climbed through matted fern and
 hazels thick;
 Then darkling through the close green
 maples went,
 And saw — there felt love's keenest
 pangs begin —
 An oriel window lighted from within:

I saw — and felt that they were scarcely
 cares
 Which I had known before. I drew
 more near,
 And O! methought how sore it frets
 and wears
 The soul to part with that it holds so
 dear:
 'Tis hard two woven tendrils to un-
 twine,
 And I was come to part with Eglantine.

For life was bitter through those words
 repressed,
 And youth was burdened with un-
 spoken vows;

Love unrequited brooded in my breast,
And shrank, at glance, from the be-
loved brows :

And three long months, heart-sick, my
foot withdrawn,
I had not sought her side by rivulet,
copse, or lawn —

Not sought her side, yet busy thought
no less

Still followed in her wake, though far
behind ;

And I, being parted from her loveliness,
Looked at the picture of her in my
mind :

I lived alone, I walked with soul op-
prest,
And ever sighed for her, and sighed for
rest.

Then I had risen to struggle with my
heart,

And said : " O heart ! the world is
fresh and fair,

And I am young ; but this thy restless
smart

Changes to bitterness the morning
air :

I will, I must, these weary fetters
break —

I will be free, if only for her sake.

" O let me trouble her no more with
sighs !

Heart-healing comes by distance and
with time :

Then let me wander, and enrich mine
eyes

With the green forests of a softer
clime,

Or list by night at sea the wind's low
stave

And long monotonous rockings of the
wave.

" Through open solitudes, unbounded
meads,

Where, wading on breast-high in yel-
low bloom,

Untamed of man, the shy white llama
feeds —

There would I journey and forget my
doom ;

Or far, O far as sunrise I would see
The level prairie stretch away from
me !

" Or I would sail upon the tropic seas,
Where fathom long the blood-red
dulces grow,

Droop from the rock and waver in the
breeze,

Lashing the tide to foam ; while calm
below

The muddy mandrakes throng those
waters warm,

And purple, gold, and green, the living
blossoms swarm."

So of my father I did win consent,
With importunities repeated long,
To make that duty which had been my
bent,

To dig with strangers alien tombs
among,

And bound to them through desert
leagues to pace,

Or track up rivers to their starting-
place.

For this I had done battle and had won,
But not alone to tread Arabian sands,

Measure the shadows of a southern sun,
Or dig out gods in the old Egyptian
lands ;

But for the dream wherewith I thought
to cope —

The grief of love unmated with love's
hope.

And now I would set reason in array,
Methought, and fight for freedom
manfully,

Till by long absence there would come
a day

When this my love would not be pain
to me ;

But if I knew my rosebud fair and blest
I should not pine to wear it on my
breast.

The days fled on ; another week should
fling

A foreign shadow on my lengthening
way ;

Another week, yet nearness did not
 bring
 A braver heart that hard farewell to
 say.

I let the last day wane, the dusk begin,
 Ere I had sought that window lighted
 from within.

Sinking and sinking, O my heart! my
 heart!

Will absence heal thee whom its
 shade doth rend?

I reached the little gate, and soft within
 The oriel fell her shadow. She did
 lend

Her loveliness to me, and let me share
 The listless sweetness of those features
 fair.

Among thick laurels in the gathering
 gloom,

Heavy for this our parting, I did
 stand;

Beside her mother in the lighted room,
 She sitting leaned her cheek upon
 her hand;

And as she read, her sweet voice, float-
 ing through

The open casement, seemed to mourn
 me an adieu.

Youth! youth! how buoyant are thy
 hopes! they turn,

Like marigolds, toward the sunny
 side.

My hopes were buried in a funeral
 urn,

And they sprang up like plants and
 spread them wide;

Though I had schooled and reasoned
 them away,

They gathered smiling near and prayed
 a holiday.

Ah, sweetest voice! how pensive were
 its tones,

And how regretful its unconscious
 pause!

"Is it for me her heart this sadness
 owns,

And our parting of to-night the
 cause?

Ah, would it might be so!" I thought,
 and stood
 Listening entranced among the under-
 wood.

I thought it would be something worth
 the pain

Of parting, to look once in those deep
 eyes,

And take from them an answering look
 again.

"When eastern palms," I thought,
 "about me rise,

If I might carve our names upon the
 rind,

Betrothed, I would not mourn, though
 leaving thee behind."

I can be patient, faithful, and most fond
 To unacknowledged love; I can be
 true

To this sweet thralldom, this unequal
 bond,

This yoke of mine that reaches not
 to you:

O, how much more could costly parting
 buy —

If not a pledge, one kiss, or, failing that,
 a sigh!

I listened, and she ceased to read; she
 turned

Her face toward the laurels where I
 stood:

Her mother spoke — O wonder! hardly
 learned;

She said, "There is a rustling in the
 wood;

Ah, child! if one draw near to bid fare-
 well,

Let not thine eyes an unsought secret
 tell.

"My daughter, there is nothing held so
 dear

As love, if only it be hard to win.

The roses that in yonder hedge appear
 Outdo our garden-buds which bloom

within;

But since the hand may pluck them
 every day,

Unmarked they bud, bloom, drop, and
 drift away.

"My daughter, my beloved, be not
you

Like those same roses." O bewildering
word!

My heart stood still, a mist obscured
my view:

It cleared; still silence. No denial
stirred

The lips beloved; but straight, as one
opprest,

She, kneeling, dropped her face upon
her mother's breast.

This said, "My daughter, sorrow
comes to all;

Our life is checked with shadows
manifold:

But woman has this more — she may
not call

Her sorrow by its name. Yet love
not told,

And only born of absence and by
thought,

With thought and absence may return
to thought."

And my beloved lifted up her face,

And moved her lips as if about to
speak;

She dropped her lashes with a girlish
grace,

And the rich damask mantled in her
cheek:

I stood awaiting till she should deny

Her love, or with sweet laughter put it
by.

But, closer nestling to her mother's
heart,

She, blushing, said no word to break
my trance,

For I was breathless; and, with lips
apart,

Felt my breast pant and all my pulses
dance,

And strove to move, but could not for
the weight

Of unbelieving joy, so sudden and so
great,

Because she loved me. With a mighty
sigh

Breaking away, I left her on her
knees,

And blest the laurel bower, the dark-
ened sky,

The sultry night of August. Through
the trees,

Giddy with gladness, to the porch I
went,

And hardly found the way for joyful
wonderment.

Yet, when I entered, saw her mother
sit

With both hands cherishing the
graceful head,

Smoothing the clustered hair, and part-
ing it

From the fair brow; she, rising, only
said,

In the accustomed tone, the accustomed
word,

The careless greeting that I always
heard;

And she resumed her merry, mocking
smile,

Though tear-drops on the glistening
lashes hung.

O woman! thou wert fashioned to be-
guile;

So have all sages said, all poets sung.

She spoke of favoring winds and wait-
ing ships,

With smiles of gratulation on her lips!

And then she looked and faltered: I
had grown

So suddenly in life and soul a man:

She moved her lips, but could not find
a tone

To set her mocking music to; began

One struggle for dominion, raised her
eyes,

And straight withdrew them, bashful
through surprise.

The color over cheek and bosom
flushed;

I might have heard the beating of her
heart,

But that mine own beat louder; when
she blushed,

The hand within mine own I felt to
start,

But would not change my pitiless decree
To strive with her for might and mastery.

She looked again, as one that, half afraid,
Would fain be certain of a doubtful thing;
Or one beseeching, "Do not me upbraid!"

And then she trembled like the fluttering
Of timid little birds, and silent stood,
No smile wherewith to mock my hardihood.

She turned, and to an open casement moved

With girlish shyness, mute beneath my gaze,
And I on downcast lashes unproved
Could look as long as pleased me;
while, the rays
Of moonlight round her, she her fair head bent,
In modest silence to my words attent.

How fast the giddy whirling moments flew!

The moon had set; I heard the midnight chime;
Hope is more brave than fear, and joy than dread,
And I could wait unmoved the parting time.

It came; for by a sudden impulse drawn,
She, risen, stepped out upon the dusky lawn.

A little waxen taper in her hand,
Her feet upon the dry and dewless grass,
She looked like one of the celestial band,

Only that on her cheeks did dawn and pass
Most human blushes; while, the soft light thrown
On vesture pure and white, she seemed yet fairer grown.

Her mother, looking out toward her, sighed,

Then gave her hand in token of farewell,
And with her warning eyes, that seemed to chide,

Scarce suffered that I sought her child to tell
The story of my life, whose every line
No other burden bore than — Eglantine.

Black thunder-clouds were rising up behind,

The waxen taper burned full steadily;
It seemed as if dark midnight had a mind

To hear what lovers say, and her decree
Had passed for silence, while she, dropped to ground
With raiment floating wide, drank in the sound.

O happiness! thou dost not leave a trace

So well defined as sorrow. Amber light,
Shed like a glory, on her angel face,
I can remember fully, and the sight
Of her fair forehead and her shining eyes,
And lips that smiled in sweet and girlish wise.

I can remember how the taper played
Over her small hands and her vesture white;

How it struck up into the trees, and laid
Upon their under leaves unwonted light;

And when she held it low, how far it spread
O'er velvet pansies slumbering on their bed.

I can remember that we spoke full low,
That neither doubted of the other's truth;

And that with footsteps slower and more slow,

Hands folded close for love, eyes wet for ruth:

Beneath the trees, by that clear taper's
 flame,
 We wandered till the gate of parting
 came.

But I forget the parting words she said,
 So much they thrilled the all-atten-
 tive soul ;

For one short moment human heart and
 head

May bear such bliss — its present is
 the whole :

I had that present, till in whispers fell
 With parting gesture her subdued fare-
 well.

"Farewell !" she said, in act to turn
 away,

But stood a moment still to dry her
 tears,

And suffered my enfolding arm to stay
 The time of her departure. O ye
 years

That intervene betwixt that day and
 this !

You all received your hue from that
 keen pain and bliss.

O mingled pain and bliss ! O pain to
 break

At once from happiness so lately
 found,

And four long years to feel for her sweet
 sake

The incompleteness of all sight and
 sound !

But bliss to cross once more the foam-
 ing brine —

O bliss to come again and make her
 mine.

I cannot — O, I cannot more recall !

But I will soothe my troubled
 thoughts to rest

With musing over journeyings wide,
 and all

Observance of this active-humored
 west,

And swarming cities steeped in eastern
 day,

With swarthy tribes in gold and striped
 array.

I turn from these, and straight there
 will succeed
 (Shifting and changing at the restless
 will),

Imbedded in some deep Circassian
 mead,

White wagon-tilts, and flocks that eat
 their fill

Unseen above, while comely shepherds
 pass,

And scarcely show their heads above
 the grass.

— The red Sahara in an angry glow,
 With amber fogs, across its hollows
 trailed

Long strings of camels, gloomy-eyed
 and slow,

And women on their necks, from
 gazers veiled,

And sun-swart guides who toil across
 the sand

To groves of date-trees on the watered
 land.

Again — the brown sails of an Arab
 boat,

Flapping by night upon a glassy sea,
 Whereon the moon and planets seem
 to float,

More bright of hue than they were
 wont to be,

While shooting-stars rain down with
 crackling sound,

And, thick as swarming locusts, drop
 to ground.

Or far into the heat among the sands

The gembok nations, snuffing up the
 wind,

Drawn by the scent of water — and the
 bands

Of tawny-bearded lions pacing, blind
 With the sun-dazzle 'in their midst, op-

prest

With prey, and spiritless for lack of rest !

What more ? Old Lebanon, the frosty-
 browed,

Setting his feet among oil-olive trees,
 Heaving his bare brown shoulder

through a cloud ;

And after, grassy Carmel, purple
 seas,

Flattering his dreams and echoing in
his rocks,
Soft as the bleating of his thousand
flocks.

Enough: how vain this thinking to
beguile,
With recollected scenes, an aching
breast!
Did not I, journeying, muse on her the
while?
Ah, yes! for every landscape comes
impressed —
Ay, written on, as by an iron pen —
With the same thought I nursed about
her then.

Therefore let memory turn again to
home;
Feel, as of old, the joy of drawing
near;
Watch the green breakers and the wind-
tossed foam,
And see the land-fog break, dissolve,
and clear;
Then think a skylark's voice far sweeter
sound
Than ever thrilled but over English
ground;

And walk, glad, even to tears, among
the wheat,
Not doubting this to be the first of
lands;
And, while in foreign words this mur-
muring, meet
Some little village school-girls (with
their hands
Full of forget-me-nots), who, greeting
me,
I count their English talk delightful
melody;

And seat me on a bank, and draw them
near,
That I may feast myself with hear-
ing it,
Till shortly they forget their bashful
fear,
Push back their flaxen curls, and
round me sit —

Tell me their names, their daily tasks,
and show
Where wild wood strawberries in the
copses grow.

So passed the day in this delightful
land:
My heart was thankful for the Eng-
lish tongue —
For English sky with feathery cloudlets
spanned —
For English hedge with glistening
dewdrops hung.
I journeyed, and at glowing eventide
Stopped at a rustic inn by the wayside.

That night I slumbered sweetly, being
right glad
To miss the flapping of the shrouds;
but lo!
A quiet dream of beings twain I had,
Behind the curtain talking soft and
low:
Methought I did not heed their utter-
ance fine,
Till one of them said softly, "Eglan-
tine."

I started up awake, 'twas silence all:
My own fond heart had shaped that
utterance clear;
And "Ah!" methought, "how sweetly
did it fall,
Though but in dream, upon the listen-
ing ear!
How sweet from other lips the name
well known —
That name, so many a year heard only
from mine own!"

I thought awhile, then slumber came to
me,
And tangled all my fancy in her maze,
And I was drifting on a raft at sea,
The near all ocean, and the far all
haze;
Through the white polished water
sharks did glide,
And up in heaven I saw no stars to
guide.

"Have mercy, God!" but lo! my raft
uprose;

Drip, drip, I heard the water splash
from it;

My raft had wings, and as the petrel
goes,

It skimmed the sea, then brooding
seemed to sit

The milk-white mirror, till, with sudden
spring,

It flew straight upward like a living
thing.

But strange! — I went not also in that
flight,

For I was entering at a cavern's
mouth;

Trees grew within, and screaming birds
of night.

Sat on them, hiding from the torrid
south.

On, on I went, while gleaming in the
dark

Those trees with blanchèd leaves stood
pale and stark.

The trees had flower-buds, nourished
in deep night,

And suddenly, as I went farther in,
They opened, and they shot out lam-
bent light;

Then all at once arose a railing din
That frightened me: "It is the ghosts,"
I said,

"And they are railing for their darkness
fled.

"I hope they will not look me in the
face;

It frighteth me to hear their laughter
loud;"

I saw them troop before with jaunty
pace,

And one would shake off dust that
soiled her shroud:

But now, O joy unhopèd! to calm my
dread,

Some moonlight filtered through a cleft
o'erhead.

I climbed the lofty trees — the blanchèd
trees —

The cleft was wide enough to let me
through;

I clambered out and felt the balmy
breeze,

And stepped on churchyard grasses
wet with dew.

O happy chance! O fortune to admire!
I stood beside my own loved village
spire.

And as I gazed upon the yew-tree's
trunk,

Lo, far-off music — music in the night!
So sweet and tender as it swelled and
sunk;

It charmed me till I wept with keen
delight,

And in my dream, methought as it drew
near

The very clouds in heaven stooped low
to hear.

Beat high, beat low, wild heart so
deeply stirred,

For high as heaven runs up the
piercing strain;

The restless music fluttering like a bird
Bemoaned herself, and dropped to
earth again,

Heaping up sweetness till I was afraid
That I should die of grief when it did
fade.

And it DID fade; but while with eager
ear

I drank its last long echo dying away,
I was aware of footsteps that drew near,

And round the ivied chancel seemed
to stray:

O, soft above the hallowed place they
trod —

Soft as the fall of foot that is not shod!

I turned — 'twas even so — yes, Eglan-
tine!

For at the first I had divined the
same;

I saw the moon on her shut eyelids
shine,

And said, "She is asleep:" still on
she came;

Then, on her dimpled feet, I saw it
gleam,

And thought, "I know that this is
but a dream."

My darling! O my darling! not the less
My dream went on because I knew
it such:

She came towards me in her loveliness —

A thing too pure, methought, for
mortal touch;

The rippling gold did on her bosom
meet,

The long white robe descended to her
feet.

The fringed lids dropped low, as sleep-
oppressed;

Her dreamy smile was very fair to see,
And her two hands were folded to her
breast,

With somewhat held between them
heedfully.

O fast asleep! and yet methought she
knew

And felt my nearness those shut eyelids
through.

She sighed: my tears ran down for
tenderness —

“And have I drawn thee to me in
my sleep?

Is it for me thou wanderest shelterless,
Wetting thy steps in dewy grasses
deep?

O if this be!” I said — “yet speak to
me;

I blame my very dream for cruelty.”

Then from her stainless bosom she did
take

Two beauteous lily flowers that lay
therein,

And with slow-moving lips a gesture
make,

As one that some forgotten words
doth win:

“They floated on the pool,” methought
she said,

And water trickled from each lily’s
head.

It dropped upon her feet — I saw it
gleam

Along the ripples of her yellow hair,
And stood apart, for only in a dream

She would have come, methought, to
meet me there.

She spoke again — “Ah fair! ah fresh
they shine!

And there are many left, and these are
mine.”

I answered her with flattering accents
meet —

“Love, they are whitest lilies e’er
were blown.”

“And sayest thou so?” she sighed in
murmurs sweet;

“I have nought else to give thee now,
mine own!

For it is night. Then take them,
love!” said she:

“They have been costly flowers to thee
— and me.”

While thus she said I took them from
her hand,

And, overcome with love and near-
ness, woke;

And overcome with ruth that she should
stand

Barefooted on the grass; that, when
she spoke,

Her mystic words should take so sweet
a tone,

And of all names her lips should choose
“My own.”

I rose, I journeyed, neared my home,
and soon

Beheld the spire peer out above the
hill:

It was a sunny harvest afternoon,

When by the churchyard wicket,
standing still,

I cast my eager eyes abroad to know

If change had touched the scenes of
long ago.

I looked across the hollow; sunbeams
shone

Upon the old house with the gable-
ends:

“Save that the laurel-trees are taller
grown,

No change,” methought, “to its grey
wall extends.

What clear bright beams on yonder lat-
tice shine!

There did I sometime talk with Eglan-
tine.’

There standing with my very goal in sight,
 Over my haste did sudden quiet steal ;
 I thought to dally with my own delight,
 Nor rush on headlong to my garnered weal,
 But taste the sweetness of a short delay,
 And for a little moment hold the bliss at bay.

The church was open ; it perchance might be
 That there to offer thanks I might essay,
 Or rather, as I think, that I might see
 The place where Eglantine was wont to pray.
 But so it was ; I crossed that portal wide,
 And felt my riot joy to calm subside.

The low depending curtains, gently swayed,
 Cast over arch and roof a crimson glow ;
 But, ne'ertheless, all silence and all shade
 It seemed, save only for the rippling flow
 Of their long foldings, when the sunset air
 Sighed through the casements of the house of prayer.

I found her place, the ancient oaken stall,
 Where in her childhood I had seen her sit,
 Most saint-like and most tranquil there of all,
 Folding her hands, as if a dreaming fit —
 A heavenly vision had before her strayed
 Of the Eternal Child in lowly manger laid.

I saw her prayer-book laid upon the seat,
 And took it in my hand, and felt more near

In fancy to her, finding it most sweet
 To think how very oft, low kneeling here,
 In her devout thoughts she had let me share,
 And set my graceless name in her pure prayer.

My eyes were dazzled with delightful tears —
 In sooth they were the last I ever shed ;
 For with them fell the cherished dreams of years.
 I looked, and on the wall above my head,
 Over her seat, there was a tablet placed,
 With one word only on the marble traced. —

Ah, well ! I would not overstate that woe,
 For I have had some blessings, little care ;
 But since the falling of that heavy blow,
 God's earth has never seemed to me so fair ;
 Nor any of His creatures so divine,
 Nor sleep so sweet : — the word was —
 EGLANTINE.

A MOTHER SHOWING THE PORTRAIT OF HER CHILD.

(F. M. L.)

LIVING CHILD or pictured cherub
 Ne'er o'ermatched its baby grace ;
 And the mother, moving nearer,
 Looked it calmly in the face ;
 Then with slight and quiet gesture,
 And with lips that scarcely smiled,
 Said, "A Portrait of my daughter
 When she was a child."

Easy thought was hers to fathom,
 Nothing hard her glance to read,
 For it seemed to say, "No praises
 For this little child I need :

If you see, I see far better,
And I will not feign to care
For a stranger's prompt assurance
That the face is fair."

Softly clasped and half extended,
She her dimpled hands doth lay:
So they doubtless placed them, saying,
"Little one, you must not play."
And while yet his work was growing,
This the painter's hand hath shown,
That the little heart was making
Pictures of its own.

Is it warm in that green valley,
Vale of childhood, where you dwell?
Is it calm in that green valley,
Round whose bourns such great
hills swell?
Are there giants in the valley —
Giants leaving footprints yet?
Are there angels in the valley?
Tell me — I forget.

Answer, answer, for the lilies,
Little one, o'er top you much,
And the mealy gold within them
You can scarcely reach to touch;
O how far their aspect differs,
Looking up and looking down!
You look up in that green valley —
Valley of renown.

Are there voices in the valley,
Lying near the heavenly gate?
When it opens, do the harp-strings,
Touched within, reverberate?
When, like shooting-stars, the angels
To your couch at nightfall go,
Are their swift wings heard to rustle?
Tell me! for you know.

Yes, you know; and you are silent,
Not a word shall asking win;
Little mouth more sweet than rosebud,
Fast it locks the secret in.
Not a glimpse upon your present
You unfold to glad my view;
Ah, what secrets of your future.
I could tell to you!

Sunny present! thus I read it,
By remembrance of my past: —
Its to-day and its to-morrow
Are as lifetimes vague and vast;
And each face in that green valley
Takes for you an aspect mild,
And each voice grows soft in saying,
"Kiss me, little child!"

As a boon the kiss is granted:
Baby mouth, your touch is sweet,
Takes the love without the trouble
From those lips that with it meet;
Gives the love, O pure! O tender!
Of the valley where it grows,
But the baby heart receiveth
MORE THAN IT BESTOWS.

Comes the future to the present —
"Ah!" she saith, "too blithe of
mood;
Why that smile which seems to whis-
per —
'I am happy, God is good?'
God is good: that truth eternal
Sown for you in happier years,
I must tend it in my shadow,
Water it with tears.

"Ah, sweet present! I must lead thee
By a daylight more subdued;
There must teach thee low to whis-
per —
'I am mournful, God is good!'"
Peace, thou future! clouds are coming,
Stooping from the mountain crest,
But that sunshine floods the valley:
Let her — let her rest.

Comes the future to the present —
"Child," she saith, "and wilt thou
rest?
How long, child, before thy footsteps
Fret to reach yon cloudy crest?
Ah, the valley! — angels guard it,
But the heights are brave to see;
Looking down were long contentment:
Come up, child, to me."

So she speaks, but do not heed her,
Little maid with wondrous eyes,
Not afraid, but clear and tender,
Blue, and filled with prophecies;

Thou for whom life's veil unlifted
Hangs, whom warmest valleys fold,
Lift the veil, the charm dissolveth —
Climb, but heights are cold.

There are buds that fold within them,
Closed and covered from our sight,
Many a richly-tinted petal,
Never looked on by the light ;
Fain to see their shrouded faces,
Sun and dew are long at strife,
Till at length the sweet buds open —
Such a bud is life.

When the rose of thine own being
Shall reveal its central fold,
Thou shalt look within and marvel,
Fearing what thine eyes behold ;
What it shows and what it teaches
Are not things wherewith to part ;
Thorny rose ! that always costeth
Beatings at the heart.

Look in fear, for there is dimness ;
Ills unshapen float anigh.
Look in awe : for this same nature
Once the Godhead deigned to die.
Look in love, for He doth love it,
And its tale is best of lore :
Still humanity grows dearer,
Being learned the more.

Learn, but not the less bethink thee
How that all can mingle tears ;
But his joy can none discover,
Save to them that are his peers ;
And that they whose lips do utter
Language such as bards have sung —
Lo ! their speech shall be to many
As an unknown tongue.

Learn, that if to thee the meaning
Of all other eyes be shown,
Fewer eyes can ever front thee,
That are skilled to read thine own ;
And that if thy love's deep current
Many another's far outflows,
Then thy heart must take for ever
LESS THAN IT BESTOWS.

STRIFE AND PEACE.

Written for THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY,
October, 1861.

THE yellow poplar leaves came down
And like a carpet lay,
No waftings were in the sunny air
To flutter them away ;
And he stepped on blithe and deb-
onair
That warm October day.

"The boy," saith he, "hath got his
own,
But sore has been the fight,
For ere his life began the strife
That ceased but yesternight ;
For the will," he said, "the kinsfolk
read,
And read it not aright.

"His cause was argued in the court
Before his christening day ;
And counsel was heard, and judge de-
murred,
And bitter waxed the fray ;
Brother with brother spake no word
When they met in the way.

"Against each one did each contend,
And all against the heir.
I would not bend, for I knew the end —
I have it for my share,
And nought repent, though my first
friend
From henceforth I must spare.

"Manor and moor and farm and wold
Their greed begrudged him sore,
And parchments old with passionate
hold
They guarded heretofore ;
And they carped at signature and seal,
But they may carp no more.

"An old affront will stir the heart
Through years of rankling pain ;
And I feel the fret that urged me yet
That warfare to maintain ;
For an enemy's loss may well be set
Above an infant's gain.

"An enemy's loss I go to prove ;
 Laugh out, thou little heir !
 Laugh in his face who vowed to chase
 Thee from thy birthright fair ;
 For I come to set thee in thy place :
 Laugh out, and do not spare."

A man of strife, in wrathful mood
 He neared the nurse's door ;
 With poplar leaves the roof and eaves
 Were thickly scattered o'er,
 And yellow as they a sunbeam lay
 Along the cottage floor.

"Sleep on, thou pretty, pretty lamb,"
 He hears the fond nurse say ;
 "And if angels stand at thy right hand,
 As now belike they may,
 And if angels meet at thy bed's feet,
 I fear them not this day.

"Come wealth, come want to thee,
 dear heart,
 It was all one to me,
 For thy pretty tongue far sweeter rung
 Than coined gold and fee ;
 And ever the while thy waking smile
 It was right fair to see.

"Sleep, pretty bairn, and never know
 Who grudged and who transgressed ;
 Thee to retain I was full fain,
 But God, He knoweth best !
 And His peace upon thy brow lies plain
 As the sunshine on thy breast !"

The man of strife, he enters in,
 Looks, and his pride doth cease ;
 Anger and sorrow shall be to-morrow
 Trouble, and no release ;
 But the babe whose life awoke the
 strife
 Hath entered into peace.

A
STORY OF DOOM,
AND OTHER POEMS.

A STORY OF DOOM, AND OTHER POEMS.

THE DREAMS THAT CAME TRUE.

I SAW in a vision once, our mother-
sphere
The world, her fixed foredoomed
oval tracing,
Rolling and rolling on and resting
never,
While like a phantom fell, behind
her pacing
The unfurled flag of night, her shadow
drear
Fled as she fled and hung to her
forever.

Great Heaven! methought, how
strange a doom to share.
Would I may never bear
Inevitable darkness after me
(Darkness endowed with drawings
strong,
And shadowy hands that cling un-
endingly),
Nor feel that phantom-wings behind
me sweep,
As she feels night pursuing through
the long
Illimitable reaches of "the vasty
deep."

God save you, gentlefolks. There was
a man
Who lay awake at midnight on his
bed, [ran
Watching the spiral flame that feeding

Among the logs upon his hearth, and
shed
A comfortable glow, both warm and
dim,
On crimson curtains that encom-
passed him.

Right stately was his chamber, soft
and white
The pillow, and his quilt was eider-
down.
What mattered it to him through all
that night
The desolate driving cloud might
lower and frown,
And winds were up the eddying sleet
to chase,
That drave and drave and found no
settling-place?

What mattered it that leafless trees
might rock,
Or snow might drift athwart his
window-pane?
He bare a charmed life against their
shock,
Secure from cold, hunger, and weath-
er stain;
Fixed in his right, and born to good
estate,
From common ills set by and separate.

From work and want and fear of want
apart,
This man (men called him Justice
Wilvermore) —

This man had comforted his cheerful
heart

With all that it desired from every
shore.

He had a right, — the right of gold is
strong, —

He stood upon his right his whole life
long.

Custom makes all things easy, and
content

Is careless, therefore on the storm
and cold,

As he lay waking, never a thought he
spent,

Albeit across the vale beneath the
wold,

Along a reedy mere that frozen lay,

A range of sordid hovels stretched
away.

What cause had he to think on them,
forsooth?

What cause that night beyond another
night?

He was familiar even from his youth
With their long ruin and their evil
plight.

The wintry wind would search them
like a scout,

The water froze within as freely as
without.

He think upon them? No! They
were forlorn,

So were the cowering inmates whom
they held;

A thriftless tribe, to shifts and leanness
born,

Ever complaining: infancy or eld
Alike. But there was rent, or long ago

Those cottage roofs had met with over-
throw.

For this they stood; and what his
thoughts might be

This winter night, I know not; but
I know

That, while the creeping flame fed
silently

And cast upon his bed a crimson
glow,

The Justice slept, and shortly in his
sleep

He fell to dreaming, and his dream was
deep.

He dreamed that over him a shadow
came;

And when he looked to find the
cause, behold

Some person knelt between him and
the flame: —

A cowering figure of one frail and
old, —

A woman; and she prayed as he de-
scribed,

And spread her feeble hands, and
shook and sighed.

“Good Heaven!” the Justice cried,
and being distraught

He called not to her, but he looked
again:

She wore a tattered cloak, but she had
naught

Upon her head; and she did quake
amain,

And spread her wasted hands and poor
attire

To gather in the brightness of his fire.

“I know you, woman!” then the Jus-
tice cried;

“I know that woman well,” he cried
aloud;

“The shepherd Aveland’s widow:
God me guide!

A pauper kneeling on my hearth:”
and bowed

The hag, like one at home, its warmth
to share!

“How dares she to intrude? What
does she here?

“Ho, woman, ho!” — but yet she did
not stir,

Though from her lips a fitful plaining
broke;

“I’ll ring my people up to deal with
her;

I’ll rouse the house,” he cried; but
while he spoke

He turned, and saw, but distant from
his bed,
Another form,—a Darkness with a
head.

Then, in a rage, he shouted, "Who
are you?"

For little in the gloom he might dis-
cern.

"Speak out; speak now; or I will
make you rue

The hour!" but there was silence,
and a stern,

Dark face from out the dusk appeared
to lean,

And then again drew back, and was
not seen.

"God!" cried the dreaming man,
right impiously,

"What have I done, that these my
sleep affray?"

"God!" said the Phantom, "I appeal
to Thee,

Appoint Thou me this man to be my
prey."

"God!" sighed the kneeling woman,
frail and old,

"I pray Thee take me, for the world is
cold."

Then said the trembling Justice, in af-
fright,

"Fiend, I adjure thee, speak thine
errand here!"

And lo! it pointed in the failing light
Toward the woman, answering, cold

and clear,

"Thou art ordained an answer to thy
prayer;

But first to tell *her* tale that kneeleth
there."

"*Her* tale!" the Justice cried. "A
pauper's tale!"

And he took heart at this so low be-
hest,

And let the stoutness of his will pre-
vail,

Demanding, "Is't for *her* you break
my rest?"

She went to jail of late for stealing
wood,

She will again for this night's hardihood.

"I sent her; and to-morrow, as I live,
I will commit her for this trespass
here."

"Thou wilt not!" quoth the Shadow,
"thou wilt give

Her story words;" and then it
stalked anear

And showed a lowering face, and, dread
to see,

A countenance of angered majesty.

Then said the Justice, all his thoughts
astray,

With that material Darkness chiding
him,

"If this must be, then speak to her, I
pray,

And bid her move, for all the room
is dim

By reason of the place she holds to-
night:

She kneels between me and the warmth
and light."

"With adjurations deep and drawings
strong,

And with the power," it said, "unto
me given,

I call upon thee, man, to tell thy
wrong,

Or look no more upon the face of
Heaven.

Speak! though she kneel throughout
the livelong night,

And yet shall kneel between thee and
the light."

This when the Justice heard, he raised
his hands,

And held them as the dead in effigy
Hold theirs, when carved upon a tomb.

The bands
Of fate had bound him fast: no

remedy
Was left: his voice unto himself was

strange,
And that unearthly vision did not

change.

He said, "That woman dwells anear
my door,

Her life and mine began the selfsame
day,

And I am hale and hearty : from my
store

I never spared her aught : she takes
her way

Of me unheeded ; pining, pinching
care

Is all the portion that she has to share.

"She is a broken-down, poor, friendless
wight,

Through labor and through sorrow
early old ;

And I have known of this her evil
plight,

Her scanty earnings, and her lodg-
ment cold ;

A patienter poor soul shall ne'er be
found :

She labored on my land the long year
round.

"What wouldst thou have me say,
thou Fiend abhorred ?

Show me no more thine awful visage
grim.

If thou obey'st a greater, tell thy lord
That I have paid her wages. Cry to
him !

He has not *much* against me. None
can say

I have not paid her wages day by day.

"The spell ! It draws me. I must
speak again ;

And speak against myself ; and
speak aloud.

The woman once approached me to
complain, —

'My wages are so low.' I may be
proud ;

It is a fault." "Ay," quoth the Phan-
tom fell,

"Sinner ! it is a fault : thou sayest
well."

"She made her moan, 'My wages are
so low.'"

"Tell on !" "She said," he an-
swered, "My best days

Are ended, and the summer is but slow
To come ; and my good strength for
work decays

By reason that I live so hard, and lie
On winter nights so bare for poverty.'"

"And you replied," — began the low-
ering shade,

"And I replied," the Justice fol-
lowed on,

"That wages like to mine my neigh-
bor paid ;

And if I raised the wages of the one
Straight should the others murmur ;
furthermore,

The winter was as winters gone before.

"No colder and not longer." "After-
ward?" —

The Phantom questioned. "After-
ward," he groaned,

"She said my neighbor was a right
good lord,

Never a roof was broken that he
owned ;

He gave much coal and clothing.
'Doth he so ?

Work for my neighbor, then,' I an-
swered. 'Go !

"'You are full welcome.' Then she
mumbled out

She hoped I was not angry ; hoped,
forsooth,

I would forgive her : and I turned
about,

And said I should be angry in good
truth

If this should be again, or ever more
She dared to stop me thus at the church
door."

"Then?" quoth the Shade ; and he,
constrained, said on,

"Then she, reproved, curtseyed her-
self away."

"Hast met her since?" it made de-
mand anon ;

And after pause the Justice answered,
"Ay ;

Some wood was stolen ; my people
made a stir :

She was accused, and I did sentence
her."

But yet, and yet, the dreaded questions
came :

"And didst thou weigh the matter, —
taking thought

Upon her sober life and honest fame?"

"I gave it," he replied, with gaze distraught;

"I gave it, Fiend, the usual care; I took

The usual pains; I could not nearer look,

"Because — because their pilfering had got head.

What wouldst thou more? The neighbors pleaded hard,

Tis true, and many tears the creature shed;

But I had vowed their prayers to disregard,

Heavily strike the first that robbed my land,

And put down thieving with a steady hand.

"She said she was not guilty. Ay, 'tis true

She said so, but the poor are liars all. O thou fell Fiend, what wilt thou?

Must I view

Thy darkness yet, and must thy shadow fall

Upon me miserable? I have done

No worse, no more than many a scathless one."

"Yet," quoth the Shade, "if ever to thine ears

The knowledge of her blamelessness was brought,

Or others have confessed with dying tears

The crime she suffered for, and thou hast wrought

All reparation in thy power, and told Into her empty hand thy brightest gold: —

"If thou hast honored her, and hast proclaimed

Her innocence and thy deplorèd wrong,

Still thou art naught; for thou shalt yet be blamed

In that she, feeble, came before thee, strong,

And thou, in cruel haste to deal a blow,

Because thou hadst been angered, worked her woe.

"But didst thou right her? Speak!"

The Justice sighed,

And beaded drops stood out upon his brow;

"How could I humble me," forlorn he cried,

"To a base beggar? Nay, I will avow

That I did ill. I will reveal the whole; I kept that knowledge in my secret soul."

"Hear him!" the Phantom muttered;

"hear this man,

O changeless God upon the judgment throne."

With that, cold tremors through his pulses ran,

And lamentably he did make his moan;

While, with its arms upraised above his head,

The dim dread visitor approached his bed.

"Into these doors," it said, "which thou hast closed,

Daily this woman shall from henceforth come;

Her kneeling form shall yet be interposed,

Till all thy wretched hours have told their sum, —

Shall yet be interposed by day, by night,

Between thee, sinner, and the warmth and light.

"Remembrance of her want shall make thy meal

Like ashes, and thy wrong thou shalt not right.

But what! Nay, verily, nor wealth nor weal

From henceforth shall afford thy soul delight.

Till men shall lay thy head beneath the
sod,
There shall be no deliverance, saith my
God."

"Tell me thy name," the dreaming
Justice cried;

"By what appointment dost thou
doom me thus?"

"'Tis well that thou shouldst know
me," it replied,

"For mine thou art, and naught shall
sever us;

From thine own lips and life I draw
my force:

The name thy nation give me is RE-
MORSE."

This when he heard, the dreaming
man cried out,

And woke affrighted; and a crimson
glow

The dying ember shed. Within, with-
out,

In eddying rings the silence seemed
to flow;

The wind had lulled, and on his fore-
head shone

The last low gleam; he was indeed
alone.

"O, I have had a fearful dream," said
he;

"I will take warning and for mercy
trust;

The fiend Remorse shall never dwell
with me:

I will repair that wrong, I will be just,
I will be kind, I will my ways amend."

*Now the first dream is told unto its
end.*

Anigh the frozen mere a cottage stood,
A piercing wind swept round and

shook the door,

The shrunken door, and easy way made
good,

And drove long drifts of snow along
the floor.

It sparkled there like diamonds, for the
moon

Was shining in, and night was at the
noon.

Before her dying embers, bent and pale,
A woman sat because her bed was
cold;

She heard the wind, the driving sleet
and hail,

And she was hunger-bitten, weak,
and old;

Yet while she cowered, and while the
casement shook,

Upon her trembling knees she held
a book—

A comfortable book for them that
mourn,

And good to raise the courage of the
poor;

It lifts the veil and shows, beyond the
bourn,

Their Elder Brother, from His home
secure,

That for them desolate He died to win,
Repeating, "Come, ye blessed, enter
in."

What thought she on, this woman? on
her days

Of toil, or on the supperless night
forlorn?

I think not so; the heart but seldom
weighs

With conscious care a burden always
borne;

And she was used to these things, had
grown old

In fellowship with toil, hunger, and
cold.

Then did she think how sad it was to
live

Of all the good this world can yield
bereft?

No, her untutored thoughts she did not
give

To such a theme; but in their warp
and weft

She wove a prayer: then in the mid-
night deep

Faintly and slow she fell away to sleep.

A strange, a marvellous sleep, which
brought a dream,

And it was this: that all at once she
heard

The pleasant babbling of a little stream
 That ran beside her door, and then a
 bird
 Broke out in songs. She looked, and
 lo! the rime
 And snow had melted; it was summer
 time!

And all the cold was over, and the
 mere
 Full sweetly swayed the flags and
 rushes green;
 The mellow sunlight poured right warm
 and clear
 Into her casement, and thereby were
 seen
 Fair honeysuckle flowers, and wander-
 ing bees
 Were hovering round the blossom-laden
 trees.

She said, "I will betake me to my
 door,
 And will look out and see this won-
 drous sight,
 How summer is come back, and frost
 is o'er,
 And all the air warm waxen in a
 night."
 With that she opened, but for fear she
 cried,
 For lo! two Angels, — one on either
 side.

And while she looked, with marvelling
 measureless,
 The Angels stood conversing face to
 face,
 But neither spoke to her. "The wil-
 derness,"
 One Angel said, "the solitary place,
 Shall yet be glad for Him." And then
 full fain
 The other Angel answered, "He shall
 reign."

And when the woman heard, in won-
 dering wise,
 She whispered, "They are speaking
 of my Lord."
 And straightway swept across the open
 skies
 Multitudes like to these. They took
 the word,

That flock of Angels, "He shall come
 again,
 My Lord, my Lord!" they sang,
 "and He shall reign!"

Then they, drawn up into the blue
 o'erhead,
 Right happy, shining ones, made
 haste to flee;
 And those before her one to other said,
 "Behold he stands aneath yon al-
 mond-tree."
 This when the woman heard, she fain
 had gazed,
 But paused for reverence, and bowed
 down amazed.

After she looked, for this her dream
 was deep;
 She looked, and there was naught
 beneath the tree;
 Yet did her love and longing overleap
 The fear of Angels, awful though
 they be,
 And she passed out between the blessed
 things,
 And brushed her mortal weeds against
 their wings.

O, all the happy world was in its best,
 The trees were covered thick with
 buds and flowers,
 And these were dropping honey; for
 the rest,
 Sweetly the birds were piping in
 their bowers;
 Across the grass did groups of Angels
 go,
 And Saints in pairs were walking to
 and fro.

Then did she pass toward the almond-
 tree,
 And none she saw beneath it: yet
 each Saint
 Upon his coming meekly bent the knee,
 And all their glory as they gazed
 waxed faint.
 And then a lighting Angel neared the
 place,
 And folded his fair wings before his
 face.

She also knelt, and spread her aged hands

As feeling for the sacred human feet ;
She said, " Mine eyes are held, but if
He stands

Anear, I will not let Him hence re-
treat

Except He bless me." Then, O
sweet! O fair!

Some words were spoken, but she
knew not where.

She knew not if beneath the boughs
they woke,

Or dropt upon her from the realms
above ;

"What wilt thou, woman?" in the
dream He spoke ;

"Thy sorrow moveth Me, thyself I
love ;

Long have I counted up thy mournful
years,

Once I did weep to wipe away thy
tears."

She said: "My one Redeemer, only
blest,

I know Thy voice, and from my
yearning heart

Draw out my deep desire, my great
request,

My prayer, that I might enter where
Thou art.

Call me, O call from this world trouble-
some,

And let me see Thy face." He an-
swered, "Come."

*Here is the ending of the second
dream.*

It is a frosty morning, keen and cold,
Fast locked are silent mere and frozen
stream,

And snow lies sparkling on the des-
ert wold ;

With savory morning meats they spread
the board,

But Justice Wilvermore will walk
abroad.

"Bring me my cloak," quoth he, as
one in haste.

"Before you breakfast, sir?" his
man replies.

"Ay," quoth he, quickly, and he will
not taste

Of aught before him, but in urgent
wise,

As he would fain some carking care
allay,

Across the frozen field he takes his
way.

"A dream! how strange that it should
move me so,

'Twas but a dream," quoth Justice
Wilvermore:

"And yet I cannot peace nor pleasure
know,

For wrongs I have not heeded here-
tofore ;

Silver and gear the crone shall have of
me,

And dwell for life in yonder cottage
free.

"For visions of the night are fearful
things,

Remorse is dread, though merely in
a dream ;

I will not subject me to visitings

Of such a sort again. I will esteem

My peace above my pride. From
natures rude

A little gold will buy me gratitude.

"The woman shall have leave to
gather wood,

As much as she may need, the long
year round ;

She shall, I say ; moreover, it were
good

Yon other cottage roofs to render
sound.

Thus to my soul the ancient peace re-
store,

And sleep at ease," quoth Justice Wil-
vermore.

With that he nears the door: a frosty
rime

Is branching over it, and drifts are
deep

Against the wall. He knocks, and
there is time—

(For none doth open),—time to list
the sweep

And whistle of the wind along the
mere,
Through beds of stiffened reeds and
rushes sear.

"If she be out, I have my pains for
naught,"

He saith, and knocks again, and yet
once more,

But to his ear nor step nor stir is
brought;

And, after pause, he doth unlatch
the door

And enter. No; she is not out, for
see,

She sits asleep 'mid frost-work winterly.

Asleep, asleep before her empty grate,
Asleep, asleep, albeit the landlord
call.

"What, dame," he saith, and comes
toward her straight,

"Asleep so early!" But whate'er
befall,

She sleepeth; then he nears her, and
behold

He lays a hand on hers, and it is cold.

Then doth the Justice to his home re-
turn;

From that day forth he wears a sad-
der brow;

His hands are opened, and his heart
doth learn

The patience of the poor. He made
a vow

And keeps it, for the old and sick have
shared

His gifts, their sordid homes he hath
repaired.

And some he hath made happy, but
for him

Is happiness no more. He doth re-
pent,

And now the light of joy is waxen dim,
Are all his hopes toward the Highest
sent;

He looks for mercy, and he waits re-
lease

Above, for this world doth not yield
him peace.

Night after night, night after desolate
night,

Day after day, day after tedious
day,

Stands by his fire, and dulls its gleamy
light,

Paceth behind or meets him in the
way;

Or shares the path by hedge-row,
mere, or stream,

The visitor that doomed him in his
dream.

Thy kingdom come.

I heard a Seer cry: "The wilderness,
The solitary place,

Shall yet be glad for Him, and He
shall bless

(Thy kingdom come) with His revealed
face

The forests; they shall drop their
precious gum,

And shed for Him their balm: and He
shall yield

The grandeur of His speech to charm
the field.

"Then all the soothèd winds shall
drop to listen,

(Thy kingdom come,)

Comforted waters waxen calm shall
glisten

With bashful tremblement beneath His
smile:

And Echo ever the while

Shall take, and in her awful joy re-
peat,

The laughter of His lips — (Thy king-
dom come):

And hills that sit apart shall be no
longer dumb;

No, they shall shout and shout,
Raining their lovely loyalty along the
dewy plain:

And valleys round about,

"And all the well-contented land,
made sweet

With flowers she opened at His
feet,

Shall answer ; shout and make the
 welkin ring,
 And tell it to the stars, shout, shout,
 and sing ;
 Her cup being full to the brim,
 Her poverty made rich with Him,
 Her yearning satisfied to its utmost
 sum —
 Lift up thy voice, O Earth, prepare thy
 song,
 It shall not yet be long,
 Lift up, O Earth, for He shall come
 again,
 Thy Lord ; and He shall reign, and
 He SHALL reign —
 Thy kingdom come."

SONGS ON THE VOICES OF BIRDS.

INTRODUCTION.

CHILD AND BOATMAN.

"MARTIN, I wonder who makes all
 the songs."
 "You do, sir?"
 "Yes, I wonder how they come."
 "Well, boy, I wonder what you'll wonder
 next!"
 "But somebody must make them?"
 "Sure enough."
 "Does your wife know?"
 "She never said she did."
 "You told me that she knew so many
 things."
 "I said she was a London woman, sir,
 And a fine scholar, but I never said
 She knew about the songs."
 "I wish she did."
 "And I wish no such thing ; she
 knows enough,
 She knows too much already. Look
 you now,
 This vessel's off the stocks, a tidy
 craft."
 "A schooner, Martin?"
 "No, boy, no ; a brig,
 Only she's schooner-rigged, — a lovely
 craft."

"Is she for me? O, thank you, Mar-
 tin dear.
 What shall I call her?"
 "Well, sir, what you please."
 "Then write on her 'The Eagle.'"
 "Bless the child!
 Eagle! why, you know naught of eagles,
 you.
 When we lay off the coast, up Canada
 way,
 And chanced to be ashore when twi-
 light fell,
 That was the place for eagles ; bald
 they were,
 With eyes as yellow as gold."
 "O, Martin, dear,
 Tell me about them."
 "Tell! there's naught to tell,
 Only they snored o' nights and frightened
 us."
 "Snored?"
 "Ay, I tell you, snored ; they
 slept upright
 In the great oaks by scores ; as true as
 time,
 If I'd had aught upon my mind just
 then,
 I would n't have walked that wood for
 unknown gold ;
 It was most awful. When the moon
 was full,
 I've seen them fish at night, in the
 middle watch,
 When she got low. I've seen them
 plunge like stones,
 And come up fighting with a fish as
 long,
 Ay, longer than my arm ; and they
 would sail —
 When they had struck its life out —
 they would sail
 Over the deck, and show their fell,
 fierce eyes,
 And croon for pleasure, hug the prey,
 and speed
 Grand as a frigate on the wind."
 "My ship,
 She must be called 'The Eagle' after
 these.
 And, Martin, ask your wife about the
 songs
 When you go in at dinner-time."
 "Not I."

THE NIGHTINGALE HEARD
BY THE UNSATISFIED
HEART.

When in a May-day hush
Chanteth the Missel-thrush,
The harp o' the heart makes answer
with murmurous stirs;
When Robin-redbreast sings,
We think on budding springs,
And Culvers when they coo are love's
remembrancers.

But thou in the trance of light
Stayest the feeding night,
And Echo makes sweet her lips with
the utterance wise,
And casts at our glad feet,
In a wisp of fancies fleet,
Life's fair, life's unfulfilled, impassioned
prophecies.

Her central thought full well
Thou hast the wit to tell,
To take the sense o' the dark and to
yield it so;
The moral of moonlight
To set in a cadence bright,
And sing our loftiest dream that we
thought none did know.

I have no nest as thou,
Bird on the blossoming bough,
Yet over thy tongue outfloweth the
song o' my soul,
Chanting, "Forego thy strife,
The spirit out-acts the life,
But MUCH is seldom theirs who can
perceive THE WHOLE.

"Thou drawest a perfect lot
All thine, but holden not,
Lie low, at the feet of beauty that ever
shall bide;
There might be sorer smart
Than thine, far-seeing heart,
Whose fate is still to yearn, and not be
satisfied."

SAND MARTINS.

I PASSED an inland-cliff precipitate;
From tiny caves peeped many a
sooty poll;
In each a mother-martin sat elate,
And of the news delivered her small
soul.

Fantastic chatter! hasty, glad, and gay,
Whereof the meaning was not ill to
tell:
"Gossip, how wags the world with you
to-day?"
"Gossip, the world wags well, the
world wags well."

And heark'ning, I was sure their little
ones
Were in the bird-talk, and discourse
was made
Concerning hot sea-bights and tropic
suns,
For a clear sultriness the tune con-
veyed;—

And visions of the sky as of a cup
Hailing down light on pagan Pha-
raoh's sand,
And quivering air-waves trembling up
and up,
And blank stone faces marvellously
bland.

"When should the young be fledged
and with them hie
Where costly day drops down in
crimson light?
(Fortunate countries of the fire-fly
Swarm with blue diamonds all the
sultry night,

"And the immortal moon takes turn
with them.)
When should they pass again by
that red land,
Where lovely mirage works a broidered
hem
To fringe with phantom-palms a
robe of sand?

"When should they dip their breasts
again and play

In slumberous azure pools, clear as
the air,
Where rosy-winged flamingoes fish all
day,
Stalking amid the lotos-blossom fair?

"Then, over podded tamarinds bear
their flight,

While cassias blossom in the zone of
calms,
And so betake them to a south sea-
bight,
To gossip in the crowns of cocoa-
palms

"Whose roots are in the spray. O,
haply there

Some dawn, white-winged they might
chance to find
A frigate, standing in to make more
fair
The loneliness unaltered of mankind.

"A frigate come to water: nuts would
fall,

And nimble feet would climb the
flower-flushed strand,
While northern talk would ring, and
therewithal
The martins would desire the cool
north land.

"And all would be as it had been be-
fore;

Again, at eve, there would be news
to tell;

Who passed should hear them chant
it o'er and o'er,

'Gossip, how wags the world?'
'Well, gossip, well.'"

A POET IN HIS YOUTH, AND THE CUCKOO-BIRD.

ONCE upon a time, I lay
Fast asleep at dawn of day;
Windows open to the south,
Fancy pouting her sweet mouth
To my ear.

She turned a globe
In her slender hand, her robe
Was all spangled; and she said,
As she sat at my bed's head,
"Poet, poet, what! asleep?
Look! the ray runs up the steep
'To your roof." Then in the golden
Essence of romances olden,
Bathed she my entranced heart.
And she gave a hand to me,
Drew me onward; "Come!" said she;
And she moved with me apart,
Down the lovely vale of Leisure.

Such its name was, I heard say,
For some Fairies trooped that way;
Common people of the place,
Taking their accustomed pleasure
(All the clocks being stopped), to race
Down the slope on palfreys fleet.
Bridle bells made tinkling sweet;
And they said, "What signified
Faring home till eventide:
There were pies on every shelf,
And the bread would bake itself."
But for that I cared not, fed,
As it were, with angels' bread,
Sweet as honey; yet next day
All foredoomed to melt away;
Gone before the sun waxed hot,
Melted manna that *was not*.

Rock-doves' poetry of plaint,
Or the starling's courtship quaint;
Heart made much of, 'twas a boon
Won from silence, and too soon
Wasted in the ample air:
Building rooks far distant were
Scarce at all would speak the rills,
And I saw the idle hills,
In their amber hazes deep,
Fold themselves and go to sleep,
Though it was not yet high noon.

Silence? Rather music brought
From the spheres! As if a thought,
Having taken wings, did fly
Through the reaches of the sky.
Silence? No, a sumptuous sigh
That had found embodiment,
That had come across the deep
After months of wintry sleep,
And with tender heavings went
Floating up the firmament.

"O," I mourned, half slumbering
yet,

"'T is the voice of *my* regret, —
Mine!" and I awoke. Full sweet
Saffron sunbeams did me greet;
And the voice it spake again,
Dropped from yon blue cup of light
Or some cloudlet swan's-down white
On my soul, that drank full fain
The sharp joy — the sweet pain —
Of its clear, right innocent,
Unreprovèd discontent.
How it came — where it went —
Who can tell? The open blue
Quivered with it, and I, too,
Trembled. I remembered me
Of the springs that used to be,
When a dimpled white-haired child,
Shy and tender and half wild,
In the meadows I had heard
Some way off the talking bird,
And had felt it marvellous sweet,
For it laughed: it did me greet,
Calling me: yet, hid away
In the woods, it would not play.
No.

And all the world about,
While a man will work or sing,
Or a child pluck flowers of spring,
Thou wilt scatter music out,
Rouse him with thy wandering note,
Changeful fancies set afloat,
Almost tell with thy clear throat,
But not quite, the wonder-rife,
Most sweet riddle, dark and dim,
That he searcheth all his life,
Searcheth yet, and ne'er expoundeth;
And so, winnowing of thy wings,
Touch and trouble his heart's strings,
That a certain music soundeth
In that wondrous instrument,
With a trembling upward sent,
That is reckoned sweet above
By the Greatness surnamed Love.

"O, I hear thee in the blue;
Would that I might wing it too!
O to have what hope hath seen!
O to be what might have been!
O to set my life, sweet bird,
To a tune that oft I heard
When I used to stand alone
Listening to the lovely moan

Of the swaying pines o'erhead,
While, a-gathering of bee-bread
For their living, murmured round,
As the pollen dropped to ground,
All the nations from the hives;
And the little brooding wives
On each nest, brown dusky things,
Sat with gold-dust on their wings.
Then beyond (more sweet than all)
Talked the tumbling waterfall;
And there were, and there were not
(As might fall, and form anew
Bell-hung drops of honey-dew)
Echoes of — I know not what;
As if some right-joyous elf,
While about his own affairs,
Whistled softly otherwheres.
Nay, as if our mother dear,
Wrapped in sun-warm atmosphere,
Laughed a little to herself,
Laughed a little as she rolled,
Thinking on the days of old.

"Ah! there be some hearts, I wis,
To which nothing comes amiss.
Mine was one. Much secret wealth
I was heir to: and by stealth,
When the moon was fully grown,
And she thought herself alone,
I have heard her, ay, right well,
Shoot a silver message down
To the unseen sentinel
Of a still, snow-thatched town.

"Once, awhile ago, I peered
In the nest where Spring was reared.
There she, quivering her fair wings,
Flattered March with chirrupings;
And they fed her; nights and days,
Fed her mouth with much sweet food,
And her heart with love and praise,
Till the wild thing rose and flew
Over woods and water-springs,
Shaking off the morning dew
In a rainbow from her wings.

"Once (I will to you confide
More), — O, once in forest wide,
I, benighted, overheard
Marvellous mild echoes stirred,
And a calling half defined,
And an answering from afar;
Somewhat talkèd with a star,
And the talk was of mankind.

“‘Cuckoo, cuckoo!’
 Float anear in upper blue:
 Art thou yet a prophet true?
 Wilt thou say, ‘And having seen
 Things that be, and have not been,
 Thou art free o’ the world, for naught
 Can despoil thee of thy thought’?
 Nay, but make me music yet,
 Bird, as deep as my regret;
 For a certain hope hath set,
 Like a star, and left me heir
 To a crying for its light,
 An aspiring infinite,
 And a beautiful despair!

“Ah! no more, no more, no more
 I shall lie at thy shut door,
 Mine ideal, my desired,
 Dreaming thou wilt open it,
 And step out, thou most admired,
 By my side to fare, or sit,
 Quenching hunger and all drouth
 With the wit of thy fair mouth,
 Showing me the wished prize
 In the calm of thy dove’s eyes,
 Teaching me the wonder-rife
 Majesties of human life,
 All its fairest possible sum,
 And the grace of its to come.

“What a difference! Why of late
 All sweet music used to say,
 ‘She will come, and with thee stay
 To-morrow, man, if not to-day.’
 Now it murmurs, ‘Wait, wait, wait!’”

A RAVEN IN A WHITE CHINE.

I SAW, when I looked up, on either
 hand,
 A pale high chalk-cliff, reared aloft
 in white;
 A narrowing rent soon closed toward
 the land,—
 Toward the sea, an open yawning
 bight.

The polished tide, with scarce a hint of
 blue,
 Washed in the bight; above with
 angry moan

A raven, that was robbed, sat up in
 view,
 Croaking and crying on a ledge alone.

“Stand on thy nest, spread out thy
 fateful wings,
 With sullen hungry love bemoan thy
 brood,
 For boys have wrung their necks, those
 imp-like things,
 Whose beaks dripped crimson daily
 at their food.

“Cry, thou black prophetess! cry, and
 despair;
 None love thee, none! Their father
 was thy foe,
 Whose father in his youth did know
 thy lair,
 And steal thy little demons long ago.

“Thou madest many childless for their
 sake,
 And picked out many eyes that loved
 the light.
 Cry, thou black prophetess! sit up,
 awake,
 Forebode; and ban them through
 the desolate night.”

Lo! while I spake it, with a crimson
 hue
 The dipping sun endowed that silver
 flood,
 And all the cliffs flushed red, and up
 she flew,
 The bird, as mad to bathe in airy
 blood.

“Nay, thou mayst cry, the omen is
 not thine,
 Thou aged priestess of fell doom,
 and fate.
 It is not blood: thy gods are making
 wine,
 They spilt the must outside their
 city gate,

“And stained their azure pavement
 with the lees:
 They will not listen though thou cry
 aloud.

Old Chance, thy dame, sits mumbling
at her ease,
Nor hears; the fair hag, Luck, is in
her shroud.

"They heed not, they withdraw the
sky-hung sign:

Thou hast no charm against the
favorite race;

Thy gods pour out for it, not blood,
but wine:

There is no justice in their dwelling-
place!

"Safe in their father's house the boys
shall rest,

Though thy fell brood doth stark
and silent lie;

Their unborn sons may yet despoil thy
nest;

Cry, thou black prophetess! lift up!
cry, cry!"

THE WARBLING OF BLACK- BIRDS.

WHEN I hear the waters fretting,
When I see the chestnut letting
All her lovely blossom falter down, I
think, "Alas the day!"

Once, with magical sweet singing,
Blackbirds set the woodland ringing,
That awakes no more while April hours
wear themselves away.

In our hearts fair hope lay smiling,
Sweet as air, and all beguiling;
And there hung a mist of bluebells on
the slope and down the dell;
And we talked of joy and splendor
That the years unborn would render,
And the blackbirds helped us with the
story, for they knew it well.

Piping, fluting, "Bees are hum-
ming,
April's here, and summer's coming;
Don't forget us when you walk, a man
with men, in pride and joy;
Think on us in alleys shady,
When you step a graceful lady;
For no fairer day have we to hope for,
little girl and boy.

"Laugh and play, O lispings waters,
Lull our downy sons and daughters;
Come, O wind, and rock their leafy
cradle in thy wanderings coy;
When they wake, we'll end the
measure
With a wild sweet cry of pleasure,
And a 'Hey down derry, let's be merry!
little girl and boy!'"

SEA-MEWS IN WINTER TIME.

I WALKED beside a dark gray sea,
And said, "O world, how cold thou
art!

Thou poor white world, I pity thee,
For joy and warmth from thee de-
part.

"Yon rising wave licks off the snow,
Winds on the crag each other chase,
In little powdery whirls they blow
The misty fragments down its face.

"The sea is cold, and dark its rim,
Winter sits cowering on the wold,
And I, beside this watery brim,
Am also lonely, also cold."

I spoke, and drew toward a rock,
Where many mews made twittering
sweet:
Their wings upreared, the clustering
flock
Did pat the sea-grass with their feet.

A rock but half submerged, the sea
Ran up and washed it while they
fed;
Their fond and foolish ecstasy
A wondering in my fancy bred.

Joy companied with every cry,
Joy in their food, in that keen wind,
That heaving sea, that shaded sky,
And in themselves, and in their
kind.

The phantoms of the deep at play!
 What idless graced the twittering
 things;
 Luxurious paddlings in the spray,
 And delicate lifting up of wings.

Then all at once a flight, and fast
 The lovely crowd flew out to sea;
 If mine own life had been recast,
 Earth had not looked more changed
 to me.

"Where is the cold? Yon clouded
 skies
 Have only dropped their curtains low
 To shade the old mother where she
 lies,
 Sleeping a little, 'neath the snow.

"The cold is not in crag, nor scar,
 Not in the snows that lap the lea,
 Not in yon wings that beat afar,
 Delighting, on the crested sea;

"No, nor in yon exultant wind
 That shakes the oak and bends the
 pine.
 Look near, look in, and thou shalt find
 No sense of cold, fond fool, but
 thine!"

With that I felt the gloom depart,
 And thoughts within me did unfold,
 Whose sunshine warmed me to the
 heart:
 I walked in joy, and was not cold.

LAURANCE.

I.

HE knew she did not love him; but so
 long
 As rivals were unknown to him, he
 dwelt
 At ease, and did not find his love a
 pain.

He had much deference in his nature,
 need
 To honor,—it became him: he was
 frank,
 Fresh, hardy, of a joyous mind, and
 strong,—
 Looked all things straight in the face.
 So when she came
 Before him first, he looked at her, and
 looked
 No more, but colored to his healthful
 brow,
 And wished himself a better man, and
 thought
 On certain things, and wished they
 were undone,
 Because her girlish innocence, the
 grace
 Of her unblemished pureness, wrought
 in him
 A longing and aspiring, and a shame
 To think how wicked was the world,—
 that world
 Which he must walk in,—while from
 her (and such
 As she was) it was hidden; there was
 made
 A clean path, and the girl moved on
 like one
 In some enchanted ring.

In his young heart
 She reigned, with all the beauties that
 she had,
 And all the virtues that he rightly
 took
 For granted; there he set her with her
 crown,
 And at her first enthronement he turned
 out
 Much that was best away, for un-
 aware
 His thoughts grew noble. She was
 always there
 And knew it not, and he grew like to
 her,
 And like to what he thought her.

Now he dwelt

With kin that loved him well,—two
 fine old folk,
 A rich, right honest yeoman, and his
 dame,—

Their only grandson he, their pride,
their heir.

To these one daughter had been born,
one child,

And as she grew to woman, "Look,"
they said,

"She must not leave us; let us build a
wing,

With cheerful rooms and wide, to our
old grange;

There may she dwell, with her good
man, and all

God sends them." Then the girl in
her first youth

Married a curate, — handsome, poor
in purse,

Of gentle blood and manners, and he
lived

Under her father's roof as they had
planned.

Full soon, for happy years are short,
they filled

The house with children; four were
born to them.

Then came a sickly season; fever
spread

Among the poor. The curate, never
slack

In duty, praying by the sick, or, worse,
Burying the dead, when all the air was
clogged

With poisonous mist, was stricken;
long he lay

Sick, almost to the death, and when his
head

He lifted from the pillow, there was
left

One only of that pretty flock: his
girls,

His three, were cold beneath the sod;
his boy,

Their eldest born, remained.

The drooping wife
Bore her great sorrow in such quiet
wise,

That first they marvelled at her, then
they tried

To rouse her, showing her their bitter
grief,

Lamenting, and not sparing; but she
sighed,

"Let me alone, it will not be for long."

Then did her mother tremble, murmur-
ing out,

"Dear child, the best of comfort will be
soon,

O, when you see this other little face,
You will, please God, be comforted."

She said,
"I shall not live to see it;" but she
did, —

A little sickly face, a wan, thin face.

Then she grew eager, and her eyes
were bright

When she would plead with them,
"Take me away,

Let me go south; it is the bitter blast
That chills my tender babe; she can-

not thrive
Under the desolate, dull, mournful
cloud."

Then all they journeyed south together,
mute

With past and coming sorrow, till the
sun,

In gardens edging the blue tideless
main,

Warned them and calmed the aching
at their hearts,

And all went better for a while; but
not

For long. They sitting by the orange
trees

Once rested, and the wife was very
still: [up

A woman with narcissus flowers heaped
Let down her basket from her head,

but paused
With pitying gesture, and drew near
and stooped,

Taking a white wild face upon her
breast.

The little babe on its poor mother's
knees,

None marking it, none knowing else,
had died.

[hind,
The fading mother could not stay be-
Her heart was broken; but it awed

them most
To feel they must not, dared not, pray
for life,

Seeing she longed to go, and went so
gladly.

After, these three, who loved each other well,
 Brought their one child away, and they were best
 Together in the wide old grange. Full oft
 The father with the mother talked of her,
 Their daughter, but the husband never-more;
 He looked for solace in his work, and gave
 His mind to teach his boy. And time went on,
 Until the grandsire prayed those other two,
 "Now part with him; it must be; for his good:
 He rules and knows it; choose for him a school,
 Let him have all the advantages, and all
 Good training that should make a gentleman."

With that they parted from their boy, and lived
 Longing between his holidays, and time
 Sped; he grew on till he had eighteen years.
 His father loved him, wished to make of him
 Another parson; but the farmer's wife
 Murmured at that — "No, no, they learned bad ways,
 They ran in debt at college; she had heard
 That many rued the day they sent their boys
 To college:" and between the two broke in
 His grandsire, "Find a sober, honest man,
 A scholar, for our lad should see the world
 While he is young, that he may marry young.
 He will not settle and be satisfied
 Till he has run about the world awhile.
 Good lack, I longed to travel in my youth,
 And had no chance to do it. Send him off,

A sober man being found to trust him with, —
 One with the fear of God before his eyes."
 And he prevailed; the careful father chose
 A tutor, young, the worthy matron thought, —
 In truth, not ten years older than her boy,
 And glad as he to range, and keen for snows,
 Desert, and ocean. And they made strange choice
 Of where to go, left the sweet day behind,
 And pushed up north in whaling ships, to feel
 What cold was, see the blowing whale come up,
 And Arctic creatures, while a scarlet sun
 Went round and round, crowd on the clear blue berg.

Then did the trappers have them; and they heard
 Nightly the whistling calls of forest-men
 That mocked the forest wonners; and they saw
 Over the open, raging up like doom,
 The dangerous dust-cloud, that was full of eyes —
 The bisons. So were three years gone like one;
 And the old cities drew them for a while,
 Great mothers, by the Tiber and the Seine;
 They have hid many sons hard by their seats,
 But all the air is stirring with them still,
 The waters murmur of them, skies at eye
 Are stained with their rich blood, and every sound
 Means men.

At last, the fourth year running out,
 The youth came home. And all the cheerful house

Was decked in fresher colors, and the
dame
Was full of joy. But in the father's
heart
Abode a painful doubt. "It is not
well ;
He cannot spend his life with dog and
gun.
I do not care that my one son should
sleep
Merely for keeping him in breath, and
wake
Only to ride to cover."

Not the less
The grandsire pondered. "Ay, the
boy must WORK
Or SPEND ; and I must let him spend ;
just stay
Awhile with us, and then from time to
time
Have leave to be away with those fine
folk
With whom, these many years, at
school, and now,
During his sojourn in the foreign towns,
He has been made familiar." Thus a
month
Went by. They liked the stirring ways
of youth,
The quick elastic step, and joyous
mind,
Ever expectant of it knew not what,
But something higher than has e'er
been born
Of easy slumber and sweet competence.
And as for him, the while they thought
and thought,
A comfortable instinct let him know
How they had waited for him, to com-
plete
And give a meaning to their lives ; and
still
At home, but with a sense of newness
there,
And frank and fresh as in the school-
boy days,
He oft — invading of his father's haunts,
The study where he passed the silent
morn —
Would sit, devouring with a greedy
joy
The piled-up books, uncut as yet ; or
wake

To guide with him by night the tube,
and search,
Ay, think to find new stars ; then, risen
betimes,
Would ride about the farm, and list
the talk
Of his hale grandsire.

But a day came round,
When, after peering in his mother's
room,
Shaded and shuttered from the light,
he ope'd
A door, and found the rosy grand-
mother
Ensnconed and happy in her special
pride,
Her store-room. She was corking syr-
ups rare,
And fruits all sparkling in a crystal
coat.
Here, after choice of certain cates well
known,
He, sitting on her bacon-chest at ease,
Sang as he watched her, till, right
suddenly,
As if a new thought came, "Goody,"
quoth he,
"What, think you, do they want to do
with me?
What have they planned for me that I
should do?"

"Do, laddie!" quoth she, faltering,
half in tears ;
"Are you not happy with us? not con-
tent?
Why would ye go away? There is no
need
That ye should do at all. O, bide at
home.
Have we not plenty?"

"Even so," he said ;
"I did not wish to go."

"Nay, then," quoth she,
"Be idle ; let me see your blessed face.
What, is the horse your father chose
for you
Not to your mind? He is? Well,
well, remain ;
Do as you will, so you but do it here.
You shall not want for money."

But, his arms
Folding, he sat and twisted up his
mouth
With comical discomfiture.

"What, then,"
She sighed, "what is it, child, that you
would like?"
"Why," said he, "farming."

And she looked at him,
Fond, foolish woman that she was, to
find
Some fitness in the worker for the
work,
And she found none. A certain grace
there was
Of movement, and a beauty in the
face,
Sun-browned and healthful beauty,
that had come
From his grave father; and she
thought, "Good lack,
A farmer! he is fitter for a duke.
He walks — why, how he walks! if I
should meet
One like him, whom I knew not, I
should ask,
And who may that be?" So the fool-
ish thought
Found words. Quoth she, half laugh-
ing, half ashamed,
"We planned to make of you — a gen-
tleman."
And, with engaging sweet audacity, —
She thought it nothing less, — he, look-
ing up,
With a smile in his blue eyes, replied
to her,
"And haven't you done it?" Quoth
she, lovingly,
"I think we have, laddie; I think we
have."
"Then," quoth he, "I may do what
best I like;
It makes no matter. Goody, you were
wise
To help me in it, and to let me farm;
I think of getting into mischief else!"
"No! do ye, laddie?" quoth the dame,
and laughed.
"But ask my grandfather," the youth
went on,

"To let me have the farm he bought
last year,
The little one, to manage. I like land;
I want some." And she, womanlike,
gave way,
Convinced; and promised, and made
good her word,
And that same night upon the matter
spoke,
In presence of the father and the son.

"Roger," quoth she, "our Laurance
wants to farm;
"I think he might do worse." The
father sat
Mute, but right glad. The grandson,
breaking in,
Set all his wish and his ambition forth;
But cunningly the old man hid his joy,
And made conditions with a faint de-
mur.
Then, pausing, "Let your father
speak," quoth he;
"I am content if he is." At his word
The parson took him; ay, and, parson
like,
Put a religious meaning in the work,
Man's earliest work, and wished his
son God speed.

II.

Thus all were satisfied, and, day by
day,
For two sweet years a happy course
was theirs;
Happy, but yet the fortunate, the
young
Loved, and much cared-for, entered on
his strife, —
A stirring of the heart, a quickening
keen
Of sight and hearing to the delicate
Beauty and music of an altered world, —
Began to walk in that mysterious light
Which doth reveal and yet transform;
which gives
Destiny, sorrow, youth, and death, and
life,
Intenser meaning; in disquieting
Lifts up; a shining light: men call it
Love.

Fair, modest eyes had she, the girl he
 loved;
 A silent creature, thoughtful, grave,
 sincere.
 She never turned from him with sweet
 caprice,
 Nor changing moved his soul to
 troublous hope,
 Nor dropped for him her heavy lashes
 low,
 But excellent in youthful grace came
 up;
 And, ere his words were ready, passing
 on,
 Had left him all a-tremble; yet made
 sure
 That by her own true will, and fixed
 intent,
 She held him thus remote. Therefore,
 albeit
 He knew she did not love him, yet so
 long
 As of a rival unaware, he dwelt
 All in the present, without fear, or hope,
 Enthralled and whelmed in the deep
 sea of love,
 And could not get his head above its
 wave
 To search the far horizon, or to mark
 Whereto it drifted him.

So long, so long;

Then, on a sudden, came the ruthless
 fate,
 Showed him a bitter truth, and brought
 him bale
 All in the tolling out of noon.

'Twas thus:

Snow-time was come; it had been
 snowing hard;
 Across the churchyard path he walked;
 the clock
 Began to strike, and, as he passed the
 porch,
 Half turning, through a sense that
 came to him
 As of some presence in it, he beheld
 His love, and she had come for shelter
 there;
 And all her face was fair with rosy
 bloom,

The blush of happiness; and one held
 up
 Her ungloved hand in both his own,
 and stooped
 Toward it, sitting by her. O, her eyes
 Were full of peace and tender light:
 they looked
 One moment in the ungraced lover's
 face
 While he was passing in the snow;
 and he
 Received the story, while he raised his
 hat
 Retiring. Then the clock left off to
 strike,
 And that was all. It snowed, and he
 walked on;
 And in a certain way he marked the
 snow,
 And walked, and came upon the open
 heath;
 And in a certain way he marked the
 cold,
 And walked as one that had no starting-
 place
 Might walk, but not to any certain goal.

And he strode on toward a hollow part,
 Where from the hillside gravel had
 been dug,
 And he was conscious of a cry, and went,
 Dulled in his sense, as though he
 heard it not;
 Till a small farmhouse drudge, a half-
 grown girl,
 Rose from the shelter of a drift that
 lay
 Against the bushes, crying, "God! O
 God,
 O my good God, He sends us help at
 last."

Then, looking hard upon her, came to
 him
 The power to feel and to perceive.
 Her teeth
 Chattered, and all her limbs with shud-
 dering failed,
 And in her threadbare shawl was
 wrapped a child
 That looked on him with wondering,
 wistful eyes.

"I thought to freeze," the girl broke
 out with tears;
 "Kind sir, kind sir," and she held out
 the child,
 As praying him to take it; and he did;
 And gave to her the shawl, and swathed
 his charge
 In the foldings of his plaid; and when
 it thrust
 Its small round face against his breast,
 and felt
 With small red hands for warmth, un-
 bearable
 Pains of great pity rent his straitened
 heart,
 For the poor upland dwellers had been
 out
 Since morning dawn, at early milking-
 time,
 Wandering and stumbling in the drift.
 And now,
 Lamed with a fall, half crippled by the
 cold,
 Hardly prevailed his arm to drag her
 on,
 That ill-clad child, who yet the younger
 child
 Had motherly cared to shield. So
 toiling through
 The great white storm coming, and
 coming yet,
 And coming till the world confounded
 sat
 With all her fair familiar features
 gone,
 The mountains muffled in an eddying
 swirl,
 He led or bore them, and the little one
 Peered from her shelter, pleased; but
 oft would mourn
 The elder, "They will beat me: O my
 can,
 I left my can of milk upon the moor."
 And he compared her trouble with his
 own,
 And had no heart to speak. And yet
 'twas keen;
 It filled her to the putting down of
 pain
 And hunger,—what could his do
 more?
 He brought
 The children to their home, and sud-
 denly

Regained himself, and, wondering at
 himself,
 That he had borne, and yet been dumb
 so long,
 The weary wailing of the girl, he paid
 Money to buy her pardon; heard them
 say,
 "Peace, we have feared for you; for-
 get the milk,
 It is no matter!" and went forth again
 And waded in the snow, and quietly
 Considered in his patience what to do
 With all the dull remainder of his days.

With dusk he was at home, and felt it
 good
 To hear his kindred talking, for it
 broke
 A mocking endless echo in his soul,
 "It is no matter!" and he could not
 choose
 But mutter, though the weariness o'er-
 came
 His spirit, "Peace, it is no matter;
 peace,
 It is no matter!" For he felt that all
 Was as it had been, and his father's
 heart
 Was easy, knowing not how that same
 day
 Hope with her tender colors and de-
 light
 (He should not care to have him know)
 were dead;
 Yea, to all these, his nearest and most
 dear,
 It was no matter. And he heard them
 talk
 Of timber felled, of certain fruitful
 fields,
 And profitable markets.

All for him
 Their plans, and yet the echoes
 swarmed and swam
 About his head, whenever there was
 pause;
 "It is no matter!" And his greater
 self
 Arose in him and fought. "It matters
 much,
 It matters all to these, that not to-day
 Nor ever they should know it. I will
 hide

The wound ; ay, hide it with a sleepless
care.

What! shall I make these three to
drink of rue,

Because my cup is bitter?" And he
thrust

Himself in thought away, and made
his ears

Hearken, and caused his voice, that
yet did seem

Another, to make answer, when they
spoke,

As there had been no snow-storm, and
no porch,

And no despair.

So this went on awhile
Until the snow had melted from the
world,

And he, one noonday, wandering up a
lane,

Met on a turn the woman whom he
loved.

Then, even to trembling he was moved ;
his speech

Faltered ; but, when the common
kindly words

Of greeting were all said, and she
passed on,

He could not bear her sweetness and
his pain.

"Muriel!" he cried; and when she
heard her name,

She turned. "You know I love you,"
he broke out.

She answered, "Yes," and sighed.

"O, pardon me,
Pardon me," quoth the lover; "let
me rest

In certainty, and hear it from your
mouth:

Is he with whom I saw you once of
late

To call you wife?" "I hope so," she
replied;

And over all her face the rose-bloom
came,

As, thinking on that other, unaware
Her eyes waxed tender. When he

looked on her,
Standing to answer him, with lovely
shame,

Submit, and yet not his, a passionate,

A quickened sense of his great impo-
tence

To drive away the doom got hold on
him;

He set his teeth to force the unbear-
able

Misery back ; his wide-awakened eyes
Flashed as with flame.

And she, all overawed
And mastered by his manhood, waited
yet,

And trembled at the deep she could
not sound, —

A passionate nature in a storm, — a
heart

Wild with a mortal pain, and in the grasp
Of an immortal love.

"Farewell," he said,
Recovering words ; and, when she gave
her hand,

"My thanks for your good candor ; for
I feel

That it has cost you something."

Then, the blush
Yet on her face, she said: "It was
your due:

But keep this matter from your friends
and kin,

We would not have it known." Then,
cold and proud,

Because there leaped from under his
straight lids,

And instantly was veiled, a keen sur-
prise, —

"He wills it, and I therefore think it
well."

Thereon they parted ; but from that
time forth,

Whether they met on festal eve, in field,
Or at the church, she ever bore her-
self

Proudly, for she had felt a certain pain ;
The disapproval hastily betrayed

And quickly hidden hurt her. "'Twas
a grace,"

She thought, "to tell this man the
thing he asked,

And he rewards me with surprise. I
like

No one's surprise, and least of all be-
stowed

Where he bestowed it."

But the spring came on.
 Looking to wed in April, all her thoughts
 Grew loving; she would fain the world
 had waxed
 More happy with her happiness, and
 off
 Walking among the flowery woods she
 felt
 Their loveliness reach down into her
 heart,
 And knew with them the ecstasies of
 growth,
 The rapture that was satisfied with
 light,
 The pleasure of the leaf in exquisite
 Expansion, through the lovely, longed-
 for spring.

And as for him — (Some narrow hearts
 there are
 That suffer blight when that they fed
 upon,
 As something to complete their being,
 fails,
 And they retire into their holds and
 pine,
 And long restrained grow stern. But
 some there are
 That in a sacred want and hunger rise,
 And draw the misery home and live
 with it,
 And excellent in honor wait, and will
 That somewhat good should yet be
 found in it,
 Else wherefore were they born?) —
 and as for him,
 He loved her, but his peace and welfare
 made
 The sunshine of three lives. The
 cheerful grange
 Threw open wide its hospitable doors
 And drew in guests for him. The gar-
 den flowers,
 Sweet budding wonders, all were set
 for him.
 In him the eyes at home were satisfied,
 And if he did but laugh the ear ap-
 proved.

What then? He dwelt among them as
 of old,
 And taught his mouth to smile.

And time went on,
 Till on a morning, when the perfect
 Spring
 Rested among her leaves, he, journey-
 ing home
 After short sojourn in a neighboring
 town,
 Stopped at the little station on the
 line
 That ran between his woods; a lonely
 place
 And quiet, and a woman and a child
 Got out. He noted them, but, walk-
 ing on
 Quickly, went back into the wood, im-
 pelled
 By hope, for, passing, he had seen his
 love,
 And she was sitting on a rustic seat
 That overlooked the line, and he de-
 sired,
 With longing indescribable, to look
 Upon her face again. And he drew
 near.
 She was right happy; she was waiting
 there.
 He felt that she was waiting for her
 lord.
 She cared no whit if Laurance went or
 stayed,
 But answered when he spoke, and
 dropped her cheek
 In her fair hand.

And he, not able yet
 To force himself away, and never-
 more
 Behold her, gathered blossom, prim-
 rose flowers,
 And wild anemone, for many a clump
 Grew all about him, and the hazel-
 rods
 Were nodding with their catkins. But
 he heard
 The stopping train, and felt that he
 must go;
 His time was come. There was naught
 else to do
 Or hope for. With the blossom he
 drew near,
 And would have had her take it from
 his hand;
 But she, half lost in thought, held out
 her own,

And then, remembering him and his
 long love,
 She said, "I thank you; pray you now
 forget,
 Forget me, Laurance," and her lovely
 eyes
 Softened; but he was dumb, till
 through the trees
 Suddenly broke upon their quietude
 The woman and her child. And
 Muriel said,
 "What will you?" She made answer
 quick and keen,
 "Your name, my lady; 'tis your name
 I want,
 Tell me your name." Not startled,
 not displeased,
 But with a musing sweetness on her
 mouth,
 As if considering in how short a while
 It would be changed, she lifted up her
 face
 And gave it, and the little child drew
 near
 And pulled her gown, and prayed her
 for the flowers.
 Then Laurance, not content to leave
 them so,
 Nor yet to wait the coming lover,
 spoke:
 "Your errand with this lady?"—"And
 your right
 To ask it?" she broke out with sud-
 den heat
 And passion: "What is that to you?
 Poor child!
 Madam!" And Muriel lifted up her
 face
 And looked,—they looked into each
 other's eyes.

"That man who comes," the clear-
 voiced woman cried,—
 "That man with whom you think to
 wed so soon,—
 You must not heed him. What! the
 world is full
 Of men, and some are good, and most,
 God knows,
 Better than he,—that I should say it!
 —far
 Better." And down her face the large
 tears ran,

And Muriel's wild dilated eyes looked
 up,
 Taking a terrible meaning from her
 words;
 And Laurance stared about him, half
 in doubt
 If this were real, for all things were so
 blithe,
 And soft air tossed the little flowers
 about;
 The child was singing, and the black-
 birds piped,
 Glad in fair sunshine. And the women
 both
 Were quiet, gazing in each other's
 eyes.

He found his voice, and spoke:
 "This is not well,
 Though whom you speak of should
 have done you wrong;
 A man that could desert and plan to
 wed
 Will not his purpose yield to God and
 right,
 Only to law. You, whom I pity so
 much,
 If you be come this day to urge a claim,
 You will not tell me that your claim
 will hold;
 'Tis only, if I read aright, the old,
 Sorrowful, hateful story!"

Muriel sighed,
 With a dull patience that he marvelled
 at:
 "Be plain with me. I know not what
 to think,
 Unless you are his wife. Are you his
 wife?
 Be plain with me." And all too
 quietly,
 With running down of tears, the an-
 swer came,
 "Ay, madam, ay! the worse for him
 and me."
 Then Muriel heard her lover's foot
 anear.
 And cried upon him with a bitter cry,
 Sharp and despairing. And those two
 stood back,
 With such affright and violent anger
 stirred, [side,
 He broke from out the thicket to her

Not knowing. But, her hands before
 her face,
 She sat; and, stepping close, that
 woman came
 And faced him. Then said Muriel,
 "O my heart,
 Herbert!" — and he was dumb, and
 ground his teeth,
 And lifted up his hand and looked at it,
 And at the woman; but a man was
 there
 Who whirled her from her place, and
 thrust himself
 Between them; he was strong, — a
 stalwart man:
 And Herbert, thinking on it, knew his
 name.
 "What good," quoth he, "though you
 and I should strive
 And wrestle all this April day? A
 word,
 And not a blow, is what these women
 want:
 Master yourself, and say it." But he,
 weak
 With passion and great anguish, flung
 himself
 Upon the seat and cried, "O lost, my
 love!
 O Muriel, Muriel!" And the woman
 spoke,
 "Sir, 'twas an evil day you wed with
 me;
 And you were young; I know it, sir,
 right well.
 Sir, I have worked; I have not troubled
 you,
 Not for myself, nor for your child. I
 know
 We are not equal." "Hold!" he
 cried; "have done;
 Your still, tame words are worse than
 hate or scorn.
 Get from me! Ay, my wife, my wife,
 indeed!
 All's done. You hear it, Muriel; if
 you can,
 O sweet, forgive me."

Then the woman moved
 Slowly away; her little singing child
 Went in her wake; and Muriel
 dropped her hands,

And sat before these two that loved her
 so,
 Mute and unheeding. There were
 angry words,
 She knew, but yet she could not hear
 the words;
 And afterwards the man she loved
 stooped down
 And kissed her forehead once, and
 then withdrew
 To look at her, and with a gesture
 pray
 Her pardon. And she tried to speak,
 but failed,
 And presently, and soon, O, — he was
 gone.

She heard him go, and Laurance, still
 as stone,
 Remained beside her; and she put her
 hand
 Before her face again, and afterward
 She heard a voice, as if, a long way
 off,
 Some one entreated, but she could not
 heed.
 Thereon he drew her hand away, and
 raised
 Her passive from her seat. So then
 she knew
 That he would have her go with him,
 go home, —
 It was not far to go, — a dreary home.
 A crippled aunt, of birth and lineage
 high,
 Had, in her youth, and for a place
 and home, [girl
 Married the stern old rector; and the
 Dwelt with them: she was orphaned,
 — had no kin
 Nearer than they. And Laurance
 brought her in,
 And spared to her the telling of this
 woe.
 He sought her kindred where they sat
 apart,
 And laid before them all the cruel
 thing,
 As he had seen it. After, he retired;
 And restless, and not master of him-
 self,
 He day and night haunted the rectory
 lanes;

And all things, even to the spreading
 out
 Of leaves, their flickering shadows on
 the ground,
 Or sailing of the slow, white cloud, or
 peace
 And glory and great light on mountain
 heads, —
 All things were leagued against him,
 ministered
 By likeness or by contrast to his love.

But what was that to Muriel, though her
 peace
 He would have purchased for her with
 all prayers,
 And costly, passionate, despairing
 tears?
 O, what to her that he should find it
 worse
 To bear her life's undoing than his
 own?

She let him see her, and she made no
 moan,
 But talked full calmly of indifferent
 things,
 Which when he heard, and marked the
 faded eyes
 And lovely wasted cheek, he started up
 With "This I cannot bear!" and
 shamed to feel
 His manhood giving way, and utterly
 Subdued by her sweet patience and his
 pain,
 Made haste and from the window
 sprang, and paced,
 Battling and chiding with himself, the
 maze.

She suffered, and he could not make
 her well
 For all his loving; — he was naught to
 her.
 And now his passionate nature, set
 astir,
 Fought with the pain that could not be
 endured;
 And like a wild thing, suddenly aware
 That it is caged, which flings and
 bruises all
 Its body at the bars, he rose, and
 raged

Against the misery: then he made all
 worse
 With tears. But when he came to her
 again,
 Willing to talk as they had talked be-
 fore,
 She sighed, and said, with that strange
 quietness,
 "I know you have been crying:" and
 she bent
 Her own fair head and wept.

She felt the cold —
 The freezing cold that deadened all her
 life —
 Give way a little; for this passionate
 Sorrow, and all for her, relieved her
 heart,
 And brought some natural warmth,
 some natural tears.

III.

And after that, though oft he sought
 her door,
 He might not see her. First they said
 to him,
 "She is not well;" and afterwards,
 "Her wish
 Is ever to be quiet." Then in haste
 They took her from the place, because
 so fast
 She faded. As for him, — though
 youth and strength
 Can bear the weight as of a world, at
 last
 The burden of it tells, — he heard it
 said,
 When autumn came, "The poor sweet
 thing will die:
 That shock was mortal." And he
 cared no more
 To hide, if yet he could have hidden,
 the blight
 That was laying waste his heart. He
 journeyed south
 To Devon, where she dwelt with other
 kin,
 Good, kindly women; and he wrote to
 them,
 Praying that he might see her ere she
 died.

So in her patience she permitted him
To be about her, for it eased his heart;
And as for her that was to die so soon,
What did it signify? She let him weep
Some passionate tears beside her couch,
she spoke

Pitying words, and then they made him
go.

It was enough, they said; her time was
short,

And he had seen her. He HAD seen,
and felt

The bitterness of death; but he went
home,

Being satisfied in that great longing
now,

And able to endure what might befall.

And Muriel lay, and faded with the
year;

She lay at the door of death, that
opened not

To take her in; for when the days
once more

Began a little to increase, she felt, —

And it was sweet to her, she was so
young, —

She felt a longing for the time of flow-
ers,

And dreamed that she was walking in
that wood

With her two feet among the prim-
roses.

Then when the violet opened, she rose
up

And walked. The tender leaf and ten-
der light

Did solace her; but she was white and
wan,

The shadow of that Muriel in the wood
Who listened to those deadly words.

And now
Empurpled seas began to blush and
bloom,

Doves made sweet moaning, and the
guelder-rose

In a great stillness dropped, and ever
dropped,

Her wealth about her feet, and there it
lay,

And drifted not at all. The lilac spread

Odorous essence round her; and full
oft,

When Muriel felt the warmth her
pulses cheer,

She, faded, sat among the May-tide
bloom,

And with a reverent quiet in her soul,
Took back — it was His will — her

time, and sat
Learning again to live.

Thus as she sat
Upon a day, she was aware of one

Who at a distance marked her. This
again

Another day, and she was vexed, for
yet

She longed for quiet; but she heard a
foot

Pass once again, and beckoned through
the trees.

“Laurance!” And all impatient of
unrest

And strife, ay, even of the sight of
them,

When he drew near, with tired, tired
lips,

As if her soul upbraided him, she said,
“Why have you done this thing?”

He answered her,
“I am not always master in the fight:
I could not help it.”

“What!” she sighed, “not yet!
O, I am sorry;” and she talked to him

As one who looked to live, imploring
him, —

“Try to forget me. Let your fancy
dwell

Elsewhere, nor me enrich with it so
long;

It wearies me to think of this your love.
Forget me!”

He made answer, “I will try:
The task will take me all my life to

learn,
Or, were it learned, I know not how to

live;
This pain is part of life and being

now, —
It is myself; but yet — but I will try.”

Then she spoke friendly to him, — of
his home,

His father, and the old, brave, loving
folk;
She bade him think of them. And
not her words,
But having seen her, satisfied his heart.
He left her, and went home to live his
life,
And all the summer heard it said of
her,
"Yet, she grows stronger;" but when
autumn came
Again she drooped.

A bitter thing it is
To lose at once the lover and the love;
For who receiveth not may yet keep
life
In the spirit with bestowal. But for
her,
This Muriel, all was gone. The man
she loved,
Not only from her present had with-
drawn,
But from her past, and there was no
such man,
There never had been.

He was not as one
Who takes love in, like some sweet
bird, and holds
The winged fluttering stranger to his
breast,
Till, after transient stay, all unaware
It leaves him: it has flown. No; this
may live
In memory, — loved till death. He
was not vile;
For who by choice would part with
that pure bird,
And lose the exultation of its song?
He had not strength of will to keep it
fast,
Nor warmth of heart to keep it warm,
nor life
Of thought to make the echo sound for
him
After the song was done. Pity that
man:
His music is all flown, and he forgets
The sweetness of it, till at last he
thinks
'Twas no great matter. But he was
not vile,

Only a thing to pity most in man,
Weak, — only poor, and, if he knew it,
undone.
But Herbert! When she mused on it,
her soul
Would fain have hidden him for ever-
more,
Even from herself, — so pure of speech,
so frank,
So full of household kindness. Ah, so
good
And true! A little, she had sometimes
thought,
Despondent for himself, but strong of
faith
In God, and faith in her, this man had
seemed.

Ay, he was gone! and she whom he
had wed,
As Muriel learned, was sick, was poor,
was sad.
And Muriel wrote to comfort her, and
send,
From her small store, money to help
her need,
With, "Pray you keep it secret."
Then the whole
Of the cruel tale was told.

What more? She died.
Her kin, profuse of thanks, not bitterly,
Wrote of the end. "Our sister fain
had seen
Her husband; prayed him sore to come.
But no.
And then she prayed him that he would
forgive,
Madam, her breaking of the truth to
you.
Dear madam, he was angry, yet we
think
He might have let her see, before she
died,
The words she wanted, but he did not
write
Till she was gone, — 'I neither can
forgive,
Nor would I if I could.'"

"Patience, my heart!
And this, then, is the man I loved!"

But yet
 He sought a lower level, for he wrote,
 Telling the story with a different hue, —
 Telling of freedom. He desired to
 come,
 "For now," said he, "O love, may all
 be well."
 And she rose up against it in her soul,
 For she despised him. And with pas-
 sionate tears
 Of shame, she wrote, and only wrote
 these words, —
 "Herbert, I will not see you."

Then she drooped
 Again; it is so bitter to despise;
 And all her strength, when autumn
 leaves down dropped,
 Fell from her. "Ah!" she thought,
 "I rose up once,
 I cannot rise up now; here is the
 end."
 And all her kinsfolk thought, "It is
 the end."

But when that other heard, "It is the
 end,"
 His heart was sick, and he, as by a
 power
 Far stronger than himself, was driven
 to her.
 Reason rebelled against it, but his will
 Required it of him with a craving
 strong
 As life, and passionate though hope-
 less pain.

She, when she saw his face, considered
 him
 Full quietly, let all excuses pass
 Not answered, and considered yet
 again.

"He had heard that she was sick;
 what could he do
 But come, and ask her pardon that he
 came?"
 What could he do, indeed?—a weak
 white girl
 Held all his heartstrings in her small
 white hand;
 His youth, and power, and majesty
 were hers,
 And not his own.

She looked, and pitied him,
 Then spoke: "He loves me with a love
 that lasts.
 Ah me! that I might get away from it,
 Or, better, hear it said that love is NOT,
 And then I could have rest. My time
 is short,
 I think, — so short." And roused
 against himself
 In stormy wrath, that it should be his
 doom
 Her to disquiet whom he loved, — ay,
 her
 For whom he would have given all his
 rest,
 If there were any left to give, — he
 took
 Her words up bravely, promising once
 more
 Absence, and praying pardon; but
 some tears
 Dropped quietly upon her cheek.

"Remain,"
 She said, "for there is something to be
 told,
 Some words that you must hear.

"And first, hear this:
 God has been good to me; you must
 not think
 That I despair. There is a quiet time
 Like evening in my soul. I have no
 heart,
 For cruel Herbert killed it long ago,
 And death strides on. Sit, then, and
 give your mind
 To listen, and your eyes to look at me.
 Look at my face, Laurance, how white
 it is;
 Look at my hand, — my beauty is all
 gone."
 And Laurance lifted up his eyes; he
 looked,
 But answered, from their deeps that
 held no doubt,
 Far otherwise than she had willed:
 they said,
 "Lovelier than ever."

Yet her words went on,
 Cold, and so quiet, "I have suffered
 much,

And I would fain that none who care
 for me
 Should suffer a like pang that I can
 spare.
 Therefore," said she, and not at all
 could blush,
 "I have brought my mind of late to
 think of this:
 That since your life is spoilt (not will-
 ingly,
 My God, not willingly by me), 'twere
 well
 To give you choice of griefs.

"Were it not best
 To weep for a dead love, and after-
 wards
 Be comforted the sooner, that she died
 Remote, and left not in your house and
 life
 Aught to remind you? That indeed
 were best.
 But were it best to weep for a dead
 wife,
 And let the sorrow spend and satisfy
 Itself with all expression, and so end?
 I think not so; but if for you 'tis best,
 Then, — do not answer with too sudden
 words:
 It matters much to you; not much, not
 much
 To me, — then truly I will die your
 wife;
 I will marry you."

What was he like to say,
 But, overcome with love and tears, to
 choose
 The keener sorrow, — take it to his
 heart,
 Cherish it, make it part of him, and
 watch
 Those eyes, that were his light, till
 they should close?

He answered her with eager, faltering
 words,
 "I choose, — my heart is yours, — die
 in my arms."

But was it well? Truly, at first, for
 him
 It was not well: he saw her fade, and
 cried,

"When may this be?" She answered,
 "When you will,"
 And cared not much, for very faint she
 grew,
 Tired and cold. Oft in her soul she
 thought,
 "If I could slip away before the ring
 Is on my hand, it were a blessed lot
 For both, — a blessed thing for him,
 and me."

But it was not so; for the day had
 come, —
 Was over: days and months had come,
 and Death, —
 Within whose shadow she had lain,
 which made
 Earth and its loves, and even its bitter-
 ness,
 Indifferent, — Death withdrew himself,
 and life
 Woke up, and found that it was fo'lded
 fast,
 Drawn to another life forevermore.
 O, what a waking! After it there came
 Great silence. She got up once more,
 in spring,
 And walked, but not alone, among the
 flowers.
 She thought within herself, "What
 have I done?
 How shall I do the rest?" And he,
 who felt
 Her inmost thought, was silent even as
 she.
 "What have we done?" she thought.
 But as for him,
 When she began to look him in the
 face,
 Considering, "Thus and thus his feat-
 ures are,"
 For she had never thought on them be-
 fore,
 She read their grave repose aright.
 She knew
 That in the stronghold of his heart,
 held back,
 Hidden reserves of measureless con-
 tent
 Kept house with happy thought, for
 her sake mute.

Most patient Muriel! when he brought
 her home,

She took the place they gave her, —
 strove to please
 His kin, and did not fail; but yet
 thought on,
 "What have I done? how shall I do
 the rest?
 Ah! so contented, Laurance, with this
 wife
 That loves you not, for all the stateli-
 ness
 And grandeur of your manhood, and
 the deeps
 In your blue eyes." And after that
 awhile
 She rested from such thinking, put it by
 And waited. She had thought on
 death before;
 But no, this Muriel was not yet to
 die;
 And when she saw her little tender
 babe,
 She felt how much the happy days of
 life
 Outweigh the sorrowful. A tiny thing,
 Whom when it slept the lovely mother
 nursed
 With reverent love, whom when it
 woke she fed
 And wondered at, and lost herself in
 long
 Rapture of watching, and contentment
 deep.
 Once while she sat, this babe upon her
 knee,
 Her husband and his father standing
 nigh,
 About to ride, the grandmother, all
 pride
 And consequence, so deep in learned
 talk
 • Of infants, and their little ways and
 wiles,
 Broke off to say, "I never saw a babe
 So like its father." And the thought
 was new
 To Muriel; she looked up, and when
 she looked,
 Her husband smiled. And she, the
 lovely bloom
 Flushing her face, would fain he had
 not known,
 Nor noticed her surprise. But he did
 know;

Yet there was pleasure in his smile
 and love
 Tender and strong. He kissed her;
 kissed his babe,
 With "Goody, you are left in charge,
 take care."
 "As if I needed telling," quoth the
 dame;
 And they were gone.

 Then Muriel, lost in thought,
 Gazed; and the grandmother, with
 open pride,
 Tended the lovely pair; till Muriel
 said,
 "Is she so like? Dear granny, get me
 now
 The picture that his father has;" and
 soon
 The old woman put it in her hand.

 The wife,
 Considering it with deep and strange
 delight,
 Forgot for once her babe, and looked
 and learned.

A mouth for mastery and manful work,
 A certain brooding sweetness in the
 eyes,
 A brow, the harbor of grave thought,
 and hair
 Saxon of hue. She conned; then
 blushed again,
 Remembering now, when she had
 looked on him,
 The sudden radiance of her husband's
 smile.

But Muriel did not send the picture
 back;
 She kept it; while her beauty and her
 babe
 Flourished together, and in health and
 peace
 She lived.

 Her husband never said to her,
 "Love, are you happy?" never said to
 her,
 "Sweet, do you love me?" and at first,
 whene'er
 They rode together in the lanes, and
 paused,

Stopping their horses, when the day
 was hot,
 In the shadow of a tree, to watch the
 clouds,
 Ruffled in drifting on the jagged rocks
 That topped the mountains, — when
 she sat by him,
 Withdrawn at even while the summer
 stars
 Came starting out of nothing, as new
 made,
 She felt a little trouble, and a wish
 That he would yet keep silence, and
 he did.
 That one reserve he would not touch,
 but still
 Respected.

Muriel grew more brave in time,
 And talked at ease, and felt disquietude
 Fade. And another child was given to
 her.

"Now we shall do," the old great-
 grandsire cried,
 "For this is the right sort, a boy."
 "Fie, fie,"
 Quoth the good dame; "but never
 heed you, love,
 He thinks them both as right as right
 can be."

But Laurance went from home, ere yet
 the boy
 Was three weeks old. It fretted him
 to go,
 But yet he said, "I must:" and she
 was left
 Much with the kindly dame, whose
 gentle care
 Was like a mother's; and the two
 could talk
 Sweetly, for all the difference in their
 years.

But unaware, the wife betrayed a wish
 That she had known why Laurance
 left her thus.
 "Ay, love," the dame made answer;
 "for he said,
 'Goody,' before he left, 'if Muriel ask
 No question, tell her naught; but if
 she let

Any disquietude appear to you,
 Say what you know.'" "What?"
 Muriel said, and laughed,
 "I ask, then."

"Child, it is that your old love,
 Some two months past, was here. Nay,
 never start:
 He's gone. He came, our Laurance
 met him near;
 He said that he was going over seas,
 'And might I see your wife this only
 once,
 And get her pardon?'"

"Mercy!" Muriel cried,
 "But Laurance does not wish it?"

"Nay, now, nay,"
 Quoth the good dame.

"I cannot," Muriel cried;
 "He does not, surely, think I should."

"Not he,"
 The kind old woman said, right sooth-
 ingly.
 "Does not he ever know, love, ever do
 What you like best?"

And Muriel, trembling yet,
 Agreed. "I heard him say," the
 dame went on,
 "For I was with him when they met
 that day,
 'It would not be agreeable to my wife.'"

Then Muriel, pondering, — "And he
 said no more?
 You think he did not add, 'nor to my-
 self?'"
 And with her soft, calm, inward voice,
 the dame
 Unruffled answered, "No, sweet heart,
 not he:
 What need he care?" "And why not?"
 Muriel cried,
 Longing to hear the answer. "O, he
 knows,
 He knows, love, very well:" — with
 that she smiled.
 "Bless your fair face, you have not
 really thought
 He did not know you loved him?"

Muriel said,
 "He never told me, goody, that he
 knew."
 "Well," quoth the dame, "but it may
 chance, my dear,
 That he thinks best to let old troubles
 sleep:
 Why need to rouse them? You are
 happy, sure?
 But if one asks, 'Art happy?' why, it
 sets
 The thoughts a-working. No, say I,
 let love,
 Let peace and happy folk alone.

"He said,
 'It would not be agreeable to my wife.'
 And he went on to add, in course of
 time
 That he would ask you, when it suited
 you,
 To write a few kind words."

"Yes," Muriel said,
 "I can do that."

"So Laurance went, you see,"
 The soft voice added, "to take down
 that child.
 Laurance had written oft about the
 child,
 And now, at last, the father made it
 known
 He could not take him. He has lost,
 they say,
 His money, with much gambling; now
 he wants
 To lead a good, true, working life. He
 wrote,
 And let this so be seen, that Laurance
 went
 And took the child, and took the money
 down
 To pay."

And Muriel found her talking sweet,
 And asked once more, the rather that
 she longed
 To speak again of Laurance, "And you
 think
 He knows I love him?"

"Ay, good sooth, he knows
 No fear; but he is like his father, love.

His father never asked my pretty child
 One prying question; took her as she
 was;
 Trusted her; she has told me so: he
 knew
 A woman's nature. Laurance is the
 same.
 He knows you love him; but he will
 not speak;
 No, never. Some men are such gen-
 tlemen!"

SONGS OF THE NIGHT WATCHES,

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SONG OF
 EVENING, AND A CONCLUDING
 SONG OF THE EARLY DAY.

INTRODUCTORY.

(Old English Manner.)

APPRENTICED.

"COME out and hear the waters shoot,
 the owlet hoot, the owlet hoot;
 Yon crescent moon, a golden boat,
 hangs dim behind the tree, O!
 The dropping thorn makes white the
 grass, O sweetest lass, and sweet-
 est lass;
 Come out and smell the ricks of hay
 adown the croft with me, O!"

"My granny nods before her wheel,
 and drops her reel, and drops
 her reel;
 My father with his crony talks as gay
 as gay can be, O!
 But all the milk is yet to skim, ere
 light wax dim, ere light wax dim;
 How can I step adown the croft, my
 'prentice lad, with thee, O?"

"And must ye bide, yet waiting's long,
 and love is strong, and love is
 strong;
 And O! had I but served the time,
 that takes so long to flee, O!

And thou, my lass, by morning's light
wast all in white, wast all in
white,
And parson stood within the rails,
a-marrying me and thee, O."

THE FIRST WATCH.

TIRED.

I.

O, I WOULD tell you more, but I am
tired;
For I have longed, and I have had
my will;
I pleaded in my spirit, I desired:
"Ah! let me only see him, and be
still
All my days after."

Rock, and rock, and rock,
Over the falling, rising watery world,
Sail, beautiful ship, along the leaping
main;
The chirping land-birds follow flock on
flock
To light on a warmer plain.
White as weaned lambs the little wave-
lets curled,
Fall over in harmless play,
As these do far away;
Sail, bird of doom, along the shimmer-
ing sea,
All under thy broad wings that over-
shadow thee.

II.

I am so tired,
If I would comfort me, I know not
how,
For I have seen thee, lad, as I de-
sired,
And I have nothing left to long for
now.

Nothing at all. And did I wait for
thee,
Often and often, while the light
grew dim,

And through the lilac branches I
could see,
Under a saffron sky, the purple
rim
O' the heaving moorland? Ay. And
then would float
Up from behind — as it were a golden
boat,
Freighted with fancies, all o' the won-
der of life,
Love — such a slender moon, going
up and up,
Waxing so fast from night to night,
And swelling like an orange flower-
bud, bright,
Fated, methought, to round as to a
golden cup,
And hold to my two lips life's best of
wine.
Most beautiful crescent moon,
Ship of the sky!
Across the unfurrowed reaches sail-
ing high.
Methought that it would come my
way full soon,
Laden with blessings that were all, all
mine, —
A golden ship, with balm and spi-
ceries rife,
That ere its day was done should
hear thee call me wife.

III.

All over! the celestial sign hath failed;
The orange flower-bud shuts; the ship
hath sailed,
And sunk behind the long low-lying
hills.
The love that fed on daily kisses
dieth;
The love kept warm by nearness lieth,
Wounded and wan;
The love hope nourished bitter tears
distils,
And faints with naught to feed
upon.
Only there stirreth very deep below
The hidden beating slow,
And the blind yearning, and the long,
drawn breath
Of the love that conquers death.

IV.

Had we not loved full long, and lost all
 fear,
 My ever, my only dear?
 Yes; and I saw thee start upon thy
 way,
 So sure that we should meet
 Upon our trysting-day.
 And even absence then to me was
 sweet,
 Because it brought me time to brood
 Upon thy dearness in the solitude.
 But ah! to stay, and stay,
 And let that moon of April wane it-
 self away,
 And let the lovely May
 Make ready all her buds for June;
 And let the glossy finch forego her
 tune
 That she brought with her in the
 spring,
 And nevertheless, I think, to me can
 sing;
 And then to lead thee home another
 bride,
 In the sultry summer-tide,
 And all forget me save for shame
 full sore,
 That made thee pray me, absent, "See
 my face no more."

V.

O hard, most hard! But while my
 fretted heart,
 Shut out, shut down, and full of
 pain,
 Sobbed to itself apart,
 Ached to itself in vain,
 One came who loveth me
 As I love thee. . . .
 And let my God remember him for
 this,
 As I do hope He will forget thy kiss,
 Nor visit on thy stately head
 Aught that thy mouth hath sworn, or
 thy two eyes have said. . . .
 He came, and it was dark. He came,
 and sighed
 Because he knew the sorrow, — whis-
 pering low,

And fast, and thick, as one that speaks
 by rote:

"The vessel lieth in the river reach,
 A mile above the beach,
 And she will sail at the turning o' the
 tide."

He said, "I have a boat,
 And were it good to go,
 And un beholden in the vessel's wake
 Look on the man thou lovedst, and
 forgive,
 As he embarks, a shameful fugitive.
 Come, then, with me."

VI.

O, how he sighed! The little stars
 did wink,
 And it was very dark. I gave my
 hand, —
 He led me out across the pasture
 land,
 And through the narrow croft,
 Down to the river's brink.
 When thou wast full in spring, thou
 little sleepy thing,
 The yellow flags that broided thee
 would stand
 Up to their chins in water, and full oft
 We pulled them and the other shining
 flowers,
 That all are gone to-day:
 We two, that had so many things to
 say,
 So many hopes to render clear:
 And they are all gone after thee, my
 dear, —
 Gone after those sweet hours,
 That tender light, that balmy rain;
 Gone "as a wind that passeth
 away,
 And cometh not again."

VII.

I only saw the stars, — I could not
 see
 The river, — and they seemed to lie
 As far below as the other stars were
 high.
 I trembled like a thing about to
 die:
 It was so awful 'neath the majesty

Of that great crystal height, that
 overhung
 The blackness at our feet,
 Unseen to fleet and fleet
 The flocking stars among,
 And only hear the dipping of the
 oar,
 And the small wave's caressing of the
 darksome shore.

VIII.

Less real it was than any dream.
 Ah me! to hear the bending willows
 shiver,
 As we shot quickly from the silent
 river,
 And felt the swaying and the flow
 That bore us down the deeper, wider
 stream,
 Whereto its nameless waters go:
 O! I shall always, when I shut mine
 eyes,
 See that weird sight again;
 The lights from anchored vessels
 hung;
 The phantom moon, that sprung
 Suddenly up in dim and angry wise
 From the rim o' the moaning
 main,
 And touched with elfin light
 The two long oars whereby we made
 our flight
 Along the reaches of the night;
 Then furrowed up a lowering cloud,
 Went in, and left us darker than
 before,
 To feel our way as the midnight watches
 wore,
 And lie in HER lee, with mournful faces
 bowed,
 That should receive and bear with her
 away
 The brightest portion of my sunniest
 day,—
 The laughter of the land, the sweetness
 of the shore.

IX.

And I beheld thee: saw the lantern
 flash
 Down on thy face when thou didst
 climb the side.

And thou wert pale, pale as the patient
 bride
 That followed: both a little sad,
 Leaving of home and kin. Thy cour-
 age glad,
 That once did bear thee on,
 That brow of thine had lost; the fervor
 rash
 Of unforeboding youth thou hadst fore-
 gone.
 O, what a little moment, what a crumb
 Of comfort for a heart to feed upon!
 And that was all its sum:
 A glimpse, and not a meeting, —
 A drawing near by night,
 To sigh to thee an unacknowledged
 greeting,
 And all between the flashing of a
 light
 And its retreating.

X.

Then after, ere she spread her wafting
 wings,
 The ship, — and weighed her anchor to
 depart,
 We stole from her dark lee, like guilty
 things;
 And there was silence in my heart,
 And silence in the upper and the nether
 deep.
 O sleep! O sleep!
 Do not forget me. Sometimes come
 and sweep,
 Now I have nothing left, thy healing
 hand
 Over the lids that crave thy visits
 bland,
 Thou kind, thou comforting one:
 For I have seen his face, as I de-
 sired,
 And all my story is done.
 O, I am tired!

THE MIDDLE WATCH.

I.

I WOKE in the night, and the darkness
 was heavy and deep;
 I had known it was dark in my
 sleep,

And I rose and looked out,
And the fathomless vault was all sparkling,
set thick round about
With the ancient inhabitants silent, and
wheeling too far

For man's heart, like a voyaging frigate,
to sail, where remote

In the sheen of their glory they float,
Or man's soul, like a bird, to fly near,
of their beams to partake,

And dazed in their wake,

Drink day that is born of a star.

I murmured, "Remoteness and greatness,
how deep you are set,

How afar in the rim of the whole ;

You know nothing of me, nor of man,
nor of earth, O, nor yet

Of our light-bearer, — drawing the
marvellous moons as they roll,

Of our regent, the sun.

I look on you trembling, and think, in
the dark with my soul,

"How small is our place 'mid the kingdoms
and nations of God :

These are greater than we, every
one."

And there falls a great fear, and a
dread cometh over, that cries,

"O my hope! Is there any mistake?

Did He speak? Did I hear? Did I
listen aright, if He spake?

Did I answer Him duly? for surely I
now am awake,

If never I woke until now."

And a light, baffling wind, that leads
nowhither, plays on my brow.

As a sleep, I must think on my day, of
my path as untrod,

Or trodden in dreams, in a dreamland
whose coasts are a doubt ;

Whose countries recede from my
thoughts, as they grope round
about,

And vanish, and tell me not how.

Be kind to our darkness, O Fashioner,
dwelling in light,

And feeding the lamps of the sky ;
Look down upon this one, and let it be
sweet in Thy sight,

I pray Thee, to-night.

O watch whom Thou madest to dwell
on its soil, Thou Most High!

For this is a world full of sorrow (there
may be but one) ;

Keep watch o'er its dust, else Thy
children for aye are undone,

For this is a world where we die.

II.

With that, a still voice in my spirit that
moved and that yearned

(There fell a great calm while it
spake),

I had heard it erewhile, but the noises
of life are so loud,

That sometimes it dies in the cry of the
street and the crowd :

To the simple it cometh, — the child, or
asleep, or awake,

And they know not from whence ; of
its nature the wise never learned

By his wisdom ; its secret the worker
ne'er earned

By his toil ; and the rich among men
never bought with his gold ;

Nor the times of its visiting monarchs
controlled,

Nor the jester put down with his
jeers

(For it moves where it will), nor
its season the aged discerned

By thought, in the ripeness of
years.

O elder than reason, and stronger than
will!

A voice, when the dark world is
still :

Whence cometh it? Father Immortal,
Thou knowest! and we, —

We are sure of that witness, that sense
which is sent us of Thee ;

For it moves, and it yearns in its fellow-
ship mighty and dread,

And let down to our hearts it is touch-
ed by the tears that we shed ;

It is more than all meanings, and over
all strife ;

On its tongue are the laws of our
life,

And it counts up the times of the
dead.

III.

I will fear you, O stars, never more.
 I have felt it! Go on, while the
 world is asleep,
 Golden islands, fast moored in God's
 infinite deep.
 Hark, hark to the words of sweet fashion,
 the harpings of yore!
 How they sang to Him, seer and saint,
 in the far away lands:
 "The heavens are the work of
 Thy hands;
 They shall perish, but Thou shalt
 endure;
 Yea, they all shall wax old, —
 But Thy throne is established, O God,
 and Thy years are made sure;
 They shall perish, but Thou shalt
 endure, —
 They shall pass like a tale that is
 told."

Doth He answer, the Ancient of
 Days?
 Will He speak in the tongue and
 the fashion of men?
 (Hist! hist! while the heaven-hung
 multitudes shine in His praise,
 His language of old.) Nay, He spoke
 with them first; it was then
 They lifted their eyes to His
 throne:
 "They shall call on Me, 'Thou art our
 Father, our God, Thou alone!'
 For I made them, I led them in deserts
 and desolate ways;
 I have found them a Ransom Divine;
 I have loved them with love everlasting,
 the children of men;
 I swear by Myself, they are
 Mine."

THE MORNING WATCH.

THE COMING IN OF THE "MER-
 MAIDEN."

THE moon is bleached as white as
 wool,
 And just dropping under;

Every star is gone but three,
 And they hang far asunder, —
 There's a sea-ghost all in gray,
 A tall shape of wonder!

I am not satisfied with sleep, —
 The night is not ended.
 But look how the sea-ghost comes,
 With wan skirts extended,
 Stealing up in this weird hour,
 When light and dark are blended.

A vessel! To the old pier end
 Her happy course she's keeping;
 I heard them name her yesterday:
 Some were pale with weeping;
 Some with their heart-hunger sighed;
 She's in, — and they are sleeping.

O! now with fancied greetings blest,
 They comfort their long aching:
 The sea of sleep hath borne to them
 What would not come with waking,
 And the dreams shall most be true
 In their blissful breaking.

The stars are gone, the rose-bloom
 comes, —
 No blush of maid is sweeter;
 The red sun, half way out of bed,
 Shall be the first to greet her.
 None tell the news, yet sleepers wake,
 And rise, and run to meet her.

Their lost they have, they hold; from
 pain
 A keener bliss they borrow.
 How natural is joy, my heart!
 How easy after sorrow!
 For once, the best is come that hope
 Promised them "to-morrow."

CONCLUDING SONG OF
 DAWN.

(*Old English Manner.*)

A MORN OF MAY.

ALL the clouds about the sun lay up in
 golden creases
 (Merry rings the maiden's voice that
 sings at dawn of day);

Lambkins woke and skipped around to
dry their dewy fleeces,
So sweetly as she carolled, all on a
morn of May.

Quoth the Sergeant, "Here I'll halt;
here's wine of joy for drinking;
To my heart she sets her hand, and in
the strings doth play;
All among the daffodils, and fairer to
my thinking,
And fresh as milk and roses, she sits
this morn of May."

Quoth the Sergeant, "Work is work,
but any ye might make me,
If I worked for you, dear lass, I'd
count my holiday.
I'm your slave for good and all, an' if
ye will but take me,
So sweetly as ye carol upon this morn
of May."

"Medals count for worth," quoth she,
"and scars are worn for honor;
But a slave an' if ye be, kind wooer, go
your way."
All the nodding daffodils woke up
and laughed upon her.
O! sweetly did she carol, all on that
morn of May.

Gladsome leaves upon the bough, they
fluttered fast and faster,
Fretting brook, till he would speak, did
chide the dull delay:
"Beauty! when I said a slave, I think
I meant a master;
So sweetly as ye carol all on this morn
of May.

"Lass, I love you! Love is strong, and
some men's hearts are tender."
Far she sought o'er wood and wold,
but found not aught to say;
Mounting lark nor mantling cloud would
any counsel render,
Though sweetly she had carolled upon
that morn of May.

Shy, she sought the wooer's face, and
deemed the wooing mended;
Proper man he was, good sooth, and
one would have his way:

So the lass was made a wife, and so the
song was ended.

O! sweetly she did carol all on that
morn of May.



A STORY OF DOOM.

BOOK I.

NILOIYA said to Noah, "What aileth
thee,
My master, unto whom is my desire,
The father of my sons?" He an-
swered her,
"Mother of many children, I have
heard
The Voice again." "Ah, me!" she
saith, "ah, me!
What spake it?" and with that Niloiya
sighed.

This when the Master-builder heard,
his heart
Was sad in him, the while he sat at
home
And rested after toil. The steady rap
O' the shipwright's hammer sounding
up the vale
Did seem to mock him; but her dis-
taff down
Niloiya laid, and to the doorplace
went,
Parted the purple covering seemly
hung
Before it, and let in the crimson light
Of the descending sun. Then looked
he forth, —
Looked, and beheld the hollow where
the ark
Was a-preparing; where the dew dis-
tilled
All night from leaves of old lign aloe-
trees,
Upon the gliding river; where the
palm,
The almag, and the gophir shot their
heads
Into the crimson brede that dyed the
world:
And lo! he marked — unwieldy, dark,
and huge —

The ship, his glory and his grief, — too
 vast
 For that still river's floating, — build-
 ing far
 From mightier streams, amid the pas-
 toral dells
 Of shepherd kings.

Niloiya spake again :
 "What said the Voice, thou well-be-
 loved man?"
 He, laboring with his thought that
 troubled him,
 Spoke on behalf of God: "Behold,"
 said he,
 "A little handful of unlovely dust
 He fashioned to a lordly grace, and
 when
 He laughed upon its beauty, it waxed
 warm,
 And with His breath awoke a living
 soul."

"Shall not the Fashioner command
 His work?
 And who am I, that, if he whisper,
 'Rise,
 Go forth upon Mine errand,' should
 reply,
 'Lord, God, I love the woman and her
 sons, —
 I love not scorning; I beseech Thee,
 God,
 Have me excused.'"

She answered him, "Tell on."
 And he continuing, reasoned with his
 soul:
 "What though I — like some goodly
 lama sunk
 In meadow grass, eating her way at
 ease,
 Unseen of them that pass, and asking
 not
 A wider prospect than of yellow flowers
 That nod above her head — should lay
 me down,
 And willingly forget this high behest,
 There should be yet no tarrying. Fur-
 thermore,
 Though I went forth to cry against the
 doom,

Earth crieth louder, and she draws it
 down:
 It hangeth balanced over us; she cri-
 eth,
 And it shall fall. O! as for me, my
 life
 Is bitter, looking onward, for I know
 That in the fulness of the time shall
 dawn
 That day: my preaching shall not
 bring forth fruit,
 Though for its sake I leave thee. I
 shall float
 Upon the abhorred sea, that mankind
 hate,
 With thee and thine."

She answered: "God forbid!
 For, sir, though men be evil, yet the
 deep
 They dread, and at the last will surely
 turn
 To Him, and He, long-suffering, will
 forgive,
 And chide the waters back to their
 abyss,
 To cover the pits where doleful creat-
 ures feed.
 Sir, I am much afraid; I would not
 hear
 Of riding on the waters: look you,
 sir,
 Better it were to die with you by hand
 Of them that hate us, than to live, ah
 me!
 Rolling among the furrows of the un-
 quiet,
 Unconsecrate, unfriendly, dreadful
 sea."

He saith again: "I pray thee, woman,
 peace,
 For thou wilt enter, when that day ap-
 pears,
 The fateful ship."

"My lord," quoth she, "I will.
 But O, good sir, be sure of this, be sure
 The Master calleth; for the time is
 long
 That thou hast warned the world:
 thou art but here

Three days; the song of welcoming but
 now
 Is ended. I behold thee, I am glad:
 And wilt thou go again? Husband, I
 say,
 Be sure who't is that calleth; O, be
 sure,
 Be sure. My mother's ghost came up
 last night,
 Whilst I thy beard, held in my hands,
 did kiss,
 Leaning anear thee, wakeful through
 my love,
 And watchful of thee till the moon
 went down.

"She never loved me since I went with
 thee
 To sacrifice among the hills: she
 smelt
 The holy smoke, and could no more
 divine
 Till the new moon. I saw her ghost
 come up;
 It had a snake with a red comb of fire
 Twisted about its waist, — the doggish
 head
 Lolloped on its shoulder, and so leered at
 me.
 'This woman might be wiser,' quoth
 the ghost;
 'Shall there be husbands for her found
 below,
 When she comes down to us? O, fool!
 O, fool!
 She must not let her man go forth, to
 leave
 Her desolate, and reap the whole
 world's scorn,
 A harvest for himself.' With that they
 passed."

He said: "My crystal drop of perfect-
 ness,
 I pity thee; it was an evil ghost:
 Thou wilt not heed the counsel?" "I
 will not,"
 Quoth she; "I am loyal to the Highest.
 Him
 I hold by even as thou, and deem Him
 best.
 Sir, am I fairer than when last we
 met?"

"God add," said he, "unto thy much
 yet more,
 As I do think thou art." "And think
 you, sir,"
 Niloiya saith, "that I have reached
 the prime?"
 He answering, "Nay, not yet." "I
 would 'twere so,"
 She plaineth, "for the daughters mock
 at me:
 Her locks forbear to grow, they say, so
 sore
 She pineth for the Master. Look you,
 sir,
 They reach but to the knee. But
 thou art come,
 And all goes merrier, Eat, my lord, of
 all
 My supper that I set, and afterward
 Tell me, I pray thee, somewhat of thy
 way;
 Else shall I be despised as Adam was,
 Who compassed not the learning of his
 sons,
 But, grave and silent, oft would lower
 his head
 And ponder, following of great Isha's
 feet,
 When she would walk with her fair
 brow upraised,
 Scorning the children that she bare to
 him."

"Ay," quoth the Master; "but they
 did amiss
 When they despised their father:
 knowest thou that?"

"Sure he was foolisher," Niloiya saith,
 "Than any that came after. Further-
 more,
 He had not heart nor courage for to
 rule:
 He let the mastery fall from his slack
 hand.
 Had not our glorious mother still borne
 up
 His weakness, chid with him, and sat
 apart,
 And listened, when the fit came over
 him
 To talk on his lost garden, he had sunk
 Into the slave of slaves."

"Nay, thou must think
 How he had dwelt long, God's loved
 husbandman,
 And looked in hope among the tribes
 for one
 To be his fellow, ere great Isha, once
 Waking, he found at his left side, and
 knew
 The deep delight of speech." So
 Noah, and thus
 Added, "And therefore was his loss
 the more;
 For though the creatures he had singled
 out
 His favorites, dared for him the fiery
 sword
 And followed after him, — shall bleat of
 lamb
 Console one for the foregone talk of
 God?
 Or in the afternoon, his faithful dog,
 Fawning upon him, make his heart
 forget
 At such a time, and such a time, to
 have heard
 What he shall hear no more?

"O, as for him,
 It was for this that he full oft would
 stop,
 And, lost in thought, stand and revolve
 that deed,
 Sad muttering, 'Woman! we reproach
 thee not;
 Though thou didst eat mine immor-
 tality;
 Earth, be not sorry; I was free to
 choose.'
 Wonder not, therefore, if he walked
 forlorn.
 Was not the helpmeet given to raise
 him up
 From his contentment with the lower
 things?
 Was she not somewhat that he could
 not rule
 Beyond the action, that he could not
 have
 By the mere holding, and that still as-
 pired
 And drew him after her? So, when
 deceived
 She fell by great desire to rise, he fell

By loss of upward drawing, when she
 took
 An evil tongue to be her counsellor:
 'Death is not as the death of lower
 things,
 Rather a glorious change, begrudged
 of Heaven,
 A change to being as gods,' — he from
 her hand,
 Upon reflection, took of death that hour,
 And ate it (not the death that she had
 dared);
 He ate it knowing. Then divisions
 came.
 She, like a spirit strayed who lost the
 way,
 Too venturesome, among the farther
 stars,
 And hardly cares, ~~because~~ it hardly
 hopes
 To find the path to heaven; in bitter
 wise
 Did bear to him degenerate seed, and
 he,
 Once having felt her upward drawing,
 longed,
 And yet aspired, and yearned to be re-
 stored,
 Albeit she drew no more."

"Sir, ye speak well,"
 Niloiya saith, "but yet the mother sits
 Higher than Adam. He did under-
 stand
 Discourse of birds and all four-footed
 things,
 But she had knowledge of the many
 tribes
 Of angels and their tongues; their
 playful ways
 And greetings when they met. Was
 she not wise?
 They say she knew much that she never
 told,
 And had a voice that called to her as
 thou."

"Nay," quoth the Master-shipwright,
 "who am I
 That I should answer? As for me,
 poor man,
 Here is my trouble: 'if there be a
 Voice,'

At first I cried, 'let me behold the
mouth
That uttereth it.' Thereon it held its
peace.
But afterward, I, journeying up the
hills,
Did hear it hollower than an echo
fallen
Across some clear abyss; and I did
stop,
And ask of all my company, 'What
cheer?
If there be spirits abroad that call to
us,
Sirs, hold your peace and hear.' So
they gave heed,
And one man said, 'It is the small
ground-doves
That peck upon the stony hillocks;'
one,
'It is the mammoth in yon cedar swamp
That cheweth in his dream;' and one,
'My lord,
It is the ghost of him that yesternight
We slew, because he grudged to yield
his wife
To thy great father, when he peaceably
Did send to take her.' Then I an-
swered, 'Pass,'
And they went on; and I did lay mine
ear
Close to the earth; but there came up
therefrom
No sound, nor any speech; I waited
long,
And in the saying, 'I will mount my
beast
And on,' I was as one that in a trance
Beholdeth what is coming, and I saw
Great waters and a ship; and somewhat
spake,
'Lo, this shall be; let him that heareth
it,
And seeth it, go forth to warn his kind,
For I will drown the world.'"

Niloiya saith,
"Sir, was that all that ye went forth
upon?"
The Master, he replieth, "Ay, at first,
That same was all; but many days
went by,
While I did reason with my heart and
hope

For more, and struggle to remain, and
think,
'Let me be certain;' and so think
again,
'The counsel is but dark; would I had
more!
When I have more to guide me, I will
go.'
And afterward, when reasoned on too
much,
It seemed remoter, then I only said,
'O, would I had the same again;' and
still
I had it not.

"Then at the last I cried,
'If the unseen be silent, I will speak
And certify my meaning to myself.
Say that He spoke, then He will make
that good
Which He hath spoken. Therefore it
were best
To go, and do His bidding. All the
earth
Shall hear the judgment so, and none
may cry
When the doom falls, "Thou God art
hard on us;
We knew not Thou wert angry. O!
we are lost,
Only for lack of being warned."

"But say
That He spoke not, and merely it befell
That I being weary had a dream.
Why, so
He could not suffer damage; when the
time
Was past, and that I threatened had
not come,
Men would cry out on me, haply me
kill,
For troubling their content. They
would not swear
"God, that did send this man, is proved
untrue,"
But rather, "Let him die; he lied to
us;
God never sent him." Only Thou,
great King,
Knowest if Thou didst speak or no. I
leave
The matter here. If Thou wilt speak
again,

I go in gladness ; if thou wilt not speak,
 Nay, if Thou never didst, I not the
 less
 Shall go, because I have believed,
 what time
 I seemed to hear Thee, and the going
 stands
 With memory of believing.' Then I
 washed,
 And did array me in the sacred gown,
 And take a lamb."

"Ay, sir," Niloiya sighed,
 "I following, and I knew not anything
 Till, the young lamb asleep in thy two
 arms,
 We, moving up among the silent hills,
 Paused in a grove to rest ; and many
 slaves
 Came near to make obeisance, and to
 bring
 Wood for the sacrifice, and turf and
 fire.
 Then in their hearing thou didst say to
 me,
 'Behold, I know thy good fidelity,
 And theirs that are about us ; they
 would guard
 The mountain passes, if it were my
 will
 Awhile to leave thee ;' and the pygmies
 laughed
 For joy, that thou wouldst trust inferior
 things ;
 And put their heads down, as their
 manner is,
 To touch our feet. They laughed, but
 sore I wept ;
 Sir, I could weep now ; ye did ill to go
 If that was all your bidding ; I had
 thought
 God drave thee, and thou couldst not
 choose but go."

Then said the son of Lamech, "After-
 ward,
 When I had left thee, He whom I had
 served
 Met with me in the visions of the night,
 To comfort me for that I had with-
 drawn
 From thy dear company. He sware to
 me

That no man should molest thee, no,
 nor touch
 The bordering of mine utmost field. I
 say,
 When I obeyed, He made His matters
 plain.
 With whom could I have left thee. but
 with them,
 Born in thy mother's house, and bound
 thy slaves?"

She said, "I love not pygmies ; they
 are naught."
 And he, "Who made them pygmies?"
 Then she pushed
 Her veiling hair back from her round,
 soft eyes,
 And answered, wondering, "Sir, my
 mothers did ;
 Ye know it." And he drew her near
 to sit
 Beside him on the settle, answering,
 "Ay."
 And they went on to talk as writ below,
 If any one shall read :

"Thy mother did,
 And they that went before her. Think-
 est thou
 That they did well?"

"They had been overcome ;
 And when the angered conquerors
 drave them out,
 Behooved them find some other way
 to rule,
 They did but use their wits. Hath
 not man aye
 Been cunning in dominion, among
 beasts
 To breed for size or swiftness, or for
 sake
 Of the white wool he loveth, at his
 choice?
 What harm if coveting a race of men
 That could but serve, they sought
 among their thralls,
 Such as were low of stature, men and
 maids ;
 Ay, and of feeble will and quiet mind?
 Did they not spend much gear to gather
 out
 Such as I tell of, and for matching
 them

One with another for a thousand years?
 What harm, then, if there came of it a
 race,
 Inferior in their wits, and in their size,
 And well content to serve?"

" 'What harm?' thou sayest.
 My wife doth ask, 'What harm?'"

"Your pardon, sir.
 I do remember that there came one
 day,
 Two of the grave old angels that God
 made,
 When first He invented life (right old
 they were,
 And plain, and venerable); and they
 said,
 Rebuking of my mother as with hers
 She sat, 'Ye do not well, you wives of
 men,
 To match your wit against the Maker's
 will,
 And for your benefit to lower the stamp
 Of His fair image, which He set at first
 Upon man's goodly frame; ye do not
 well
 To treat His likeness even as ye treat
 The bird and beast that perish.'"

"Said they aught
 To appease the ancients, or to speak
 them fair?"

"How know I? 'Twas a slave that
 told it me.
 My mother was full old when I was
 born,
 And that was in her youth. What
 think you, sir?
 Did not the giants likewise ill?"

"To that
 I have no answer ready. If a man,
 When each one is against his fellow,
 rule,
 Or unmolested dwell, or unreprieved,
 Because, for size and strength, he
 standeth first,
 He will thereof be glad; and if he say,
 'I will to wife choose me a stately maid,
 And leave a goodly offspring;' 'sooth,
 I think,

He sinneth not; for good to him and
 his
 He would be strong and great. Thy
 people's fault
 Was, that for ill to others, they did
 plot
 To make them weak and small."

"But yet they steal
 Or take in war the strongest maids, and
 such
 As are of highest stature; ay, and oft
 They fight among themselves for that
 same cause.
 And they are proud against the King
 of heaven:
 They hope in course of ages they shall
 come
 To be as strong as He."

The Master said,
 "I will not hear thee talk thereof; my
 heart
 Is sick for all this wicked world. Fair
 wife,
 I am right weary. Call thy slaves to
 thee,
 And bid that they prepare the sleeping
 place.
 O would that I might rest! I fain
 would rest,
 And, no more wandering, tell a thank-
 less world
 My never-heeded tale!"

With that she called.
 The moon was up, and some few stars
 were out,
 While heavy at the heart he walked
 abroad
 To meditate before his sleep. And
 yet
 Niloiya pondered, "Shall my master
 go?
 And will my master go? What 'vail-
 eth it,
 That he doth spend himself, over the
 waste
 A-wandering, till he reach outlandish
 folk,
 That mock his warning? O, what
 'vaileth it,
 That he doth lavish wealth to build yon
 ark,

Whereat the daughters, when they eat
 with me,
 Laugh? O my heart! I would the
 Voice were stilled.
 Is not he happy? Who, of all the
 earth,
 Obeyeth like to me? Have not I
 learned
 From his dear mouth to utter seemly
 words,
 And lay the powers my mother gave
 me by?
 Have I made offerings to the dragon?
 Nay.
 And I am faithful, when he leaveth
 me
 Lonely betwixt the peaked mountain
 tops
 In this long valley, where no stranger
 foot
 Can come without my will. He shall
 not go.
 Not yet, not yet! But three days—
 only three—
 Beside me, and a-muttering on the
 third,
 ‘I have heard the Voice again.’ Be
 dull, O dull,
 Mind and remembrance! Mother, ye
 did ill;
 ’Tis hard unlawful knowledge not to
 use.
 Why, O dark mother! opened ye the
 way?”
 Yet when he entered, and did lay aside
 His costly robe of sacrifice,—the robe
 Wherein he had been offering, ere the
 sun
 Went down,—forgetful of her mother’s
 craft,
 She lovely and submiss did mourn to
 him:
 “Thou wilt not go,—I pray thee do
 not go,
 Till thou hast seen thy children.”
 And he said,
 “I will not. I have cried, and have
 prevailed:
 To-morrow it is given me by the Voice
 Upon a four-days’ journey to proceed,
 And follow down the river, till its
 waves
 Are swallowed in the sand, where no
 flesh dwells.

“‘There,’ quoth the Unrevealed, ‘we
 shall meet,
 And I will counsel thee; and thou
 shalt turn
 And rest thee with the mother, and
 with them
 She bare.’ Now, therefore, when the
 morn appears,
 Thou fairest among women, call thy
 slaves,
 And bid them yoke the steers, and
 spread thy car
 With robes, the choicest work of cunning
 hands;
 Array thee in thy rich apparel, deck
 Thy locks with gold; and while the
 hollow vale
 I thread beside yon river, go thou forth
 Between the mountains to my father’s
 house,
 And let thy slaves make all obeisance
 due,
 And take and lay an offering at his feet.
 Then light, and cry to him, ‘Great
 king, the son
 Of old Methuselah, thy son hath sent
 To fetch the growing maids, his children,
 home.’”

“Sir,” quoth the woman, “I will do
 this thing,
 So thou keep faith with me, and yet return.
 But will the Voice, think you, forbear
 to chide,
 Nor that Unseen, who calleth, buffet
 thee,
 And drive thee on?”

He saith, “It will keep faith.
 Fear not. I have prevailed, for I besought,
 And lovingly it answered. I shall rest,
 And dwell with thee till after my three
 sons
 Come from the chase.” She said, “I
 let them forth
 In fear, for they are young. Their
 slaves are few.
 The giant elephants be cunning folk;
 They lie in ambush, and will draw men
 on
 To follow,—then will turn and tread
 them down.”

"Thy father's house unwisely planned," said he,
 "To drive them down upon the growing corn
 Of them that were their foes; for now, behold,
 They suffer while the unwieldy beasts delay
 Retirement to their lands, and, meanwhile, pound
 The damp, deep meadows, to a pulpy mash;
 Or wallowing in the waters foul them;
 nay,
 Tread down the banks, and let them forth to flood
 Their cities; or, assailed and falling, shake
 The walls, and taint the wind, ere thirty men,
 Over the hairy terror piling stones
 Or earth, prevail to cover it."

She said,

"Husband, I have been sorry, thinking oft
 I would my sons were home; but now so well
 Methinks it is with me, that I am fain
 To wish they might delay, for thou wilt dwell
 With me till after they return, and thou
 Hast set thine eyes upon them. Then, ah me!
 I must sit joyless in my place; bereft,
 As trees that suddenly have dropped their leaves,
 And dark as nights that have no moon."

She spake:

The hope o' the world did hearken, but reply
 Made none. He left his hand on her fair locks
 As she lay sobbing; and the quietness
 Of night began to comfort her, the fall
 Of far-off waters, and the winged wind
 That went among the trees. The patient hand,
 Moreover, that was steady, wrought with her,
 Until she said, "What wilt thou? Nay, I know."

I therefore answer what thou utterest not.
Thou lovest me well, and not for thine own will
Consentest to depart. What more?
 Ay, this:
I do avow that He which calleth thee
Hath right to call; and I do swear the Voice
Shall have no let of me to do Its will."

BOOK II.

Now ere the sunrise, while the morning star
 Hung yet behind the pine-bough, woke and prayed
 The world's great shipwright, and his soul was glad
 Because the Voice was favorable. Now
 Began the tap o' the hammer, now ran forth
 The slaves preparing food. They therefore ate
 In peace together; then Niloiya forth
 Behind the milk-white steers went on her way;
 And the great Master-builder, down the course
 Of the long river, on his errand sped,
 And as he went, he thought:

[They do not well

Who, walking up a trodden path, all smooth
 With footsteps of their fellows, and made straight
 From town to town, will scorn at them that wonn
 Under the covert of God's eldest trees
 (Such as He planted with His hand, and fed
 With dew before rain fell, till they stood close
 And awful; drank the light up as it dropt,
 And kept the dusk of ages at their roots), —
 They do not well who mock at such, and cry.
 "We peaceably, without or fault or fear,

Proceed, and miss not of our end ; but
 these
 Are slow and fearful: with uncertain
 pace,
 And ever reasoning of the way, they
 oft,
 After all reasoning, choose the worser
 course,
 And, plunged in swamp, or in the mat-
 ted growth
 Nigh smothered struggle, all to reach
 a goal
 Not worth their pains." Nor do they
 well whose work
 Is still to feed and shelter them and
 theirs,
 Get gain, and gathered store it, to
 think scorn
 Of those who work for a world (no
 wages paid
 By a Master hid in light), and sent
 alone
 To face a laughing multitude, whose
 eyes
 Are full of damaging pity, that forbears
 To tell the harmless laborer, "Thou
 art mad."']

And as he went, he thought: "They
 counsel me,
 Ay, with a kind of reason in their talk,
 'Consider; call thy soberer thought to
 aid;
 Why to but one man should a message
 come?
 And why, if but to one, to thee? Art
 thou
 Above us, greater, wiser? Had He
 sent,
 He had willed that we should heed.
 Then since He knoweth
 That such as thou a wise man cannot
 heed,
 He did not send.' My answer, 'Great
 and wise,
 If He had sent with thunder, and a
 voice
 Leaping from heaven, ye must have
 heard; but so
 Ye had been robbed of choice, and,
 like the beasts,
 Yoked to obedience. God makes no
 men slaves.'

They tell me, 'God is great above thy
 thought:
 He meddles not; and this small world
 is ours,
 These many hundred years we govern
 it;
 Old Adam, after Eden, saw Him
 not.'
 Then I, 'It may be He is gone to
 knead
 More clay. But look, my masters;
 one of you,
 Going to warfare, layeth up his gown,
 His sickle, or his gold, and thinks no
 more
 Upon it, till young trees have waxen
 great;
 At last, when he returneth, he will
 seek
 His own. And God, shall He not do
 the like?
 And, having set new worlds a-rolling,
 come
 And say, 'I will betake Me to the
 earth
 That I did make;' and, having found
 it vile,
 Be sorry. Why should man be free,
 you wise,
 And not the Master?' Then they an-
 swer, 'Fool!
 A man shall cast a stone into the air
 For pastime, or for lack of heed, — but
 He!
 Will He come fingering of His ended
 work,
 Fright it with His approaching face, or
 snatch
 One day the rolling wonder from its
 ring,
 And hold it quivering, as a wanton
 child
 Might take a nestling from its downy
 bed,
 And having satisfied a careless wish,
 Go thrust it back into its place again?'
 To such I answer, and, that doubt once
 mine,
 I am assured that I do speak aright:
 'Sirs, the significance of this your
 doubt
 Lies in the reason of it; ye do grudge
 That these your lands should have
 another Lord;

Ye are not loyal, therefore ye would
 fain
 Your King would bide afar. But if ye
 looked
 For countenance and favor when He
 came,
 Knowing yourselves right worthy,
 would ye care,
 With cautious reasoning, deep and hard,
 to prove
 That He would never come, and would
 your wrath
 Be hot against a prophet? Nay, I
 wot
 That as a flatterer you would look on
 him, —
 "Full of sweet words thy mouth is: if
 He come, —
 We think not that He will, — but if
 He come,
 Would it might be to-morrow, or to-
 night,
 Because we look for praise." " "

Now, as he went,
 The noontide heats came on, and he
 grew faint;
 But while he sat below an almug-tree,
 A slave approached with greeting.
 "Master, hail!"
 He answered, "Hail! what wilt thou?"
 Then she said,
 "The palace of thy fathers standeth
 nigh."
 "I know it," quoth he; and she said
 again,
 "The Elder, learning thou wouldst
 pass, hath sent
 To fetch thee." Then he rose and
 followed her.
 So first they walked beneath a lofty
 roof
 Of living bough and tendril, woven on
 high
 To let no drop of sunshine through,
 and hung
 With gold and purple fruitage, and the
 white
 Thick cups of scented blossom. Un-
 derneath,
 Soft grew the sward and delicate, and
 flocks
 Of egrets, ay, and many cranes, stood
 up,

Fanning their wings, to agitate and
 cool
 The noonday air, as men with heed
 and pains
 Had taught them, marshalling and tam-
 ing them
 To bear the wind in on their moving
 wings.

So long time as a nimble slave would
 spend
 In milking of her cow, they walked at
 ease;
 Then reached the palace, all of forest
 trunks,
 Brought whole and set together, made.
 Therein
 Had dwelt old Adam, when his mighty
 sons
 Had finished it, and up to Eden gate
 Had journeyed for to fetch him.
 "Here," they said,
 "Mother and father, ye may dwell,
 and here
 Forget the garden wholly."

So he came
 Under the doorplace, and the women
 sat,
 Each with her finger on her lips; but
 he,
 Having been called, went on, until he
 reached
 The jewelled settle, wrought with cun-
 ning work
 Of gold and ivory, whereon they wont
 To set the Elder. All with sleekest
 skins,
 That striped and spotted creatures of
 the wood
 Had worn, the seat was covered, but
 thereon
 The Elder was not: by the steps there-
 of,
 Upon the floor, whereto his silver
 beard
 Did reach, he sat, and he was in his
 trance.
 Upon the settle many doves were per-
 ched,
 That set the air a-going with their
 wings:
 These opposite, the world's great ship-
 wright stood

To wait the burden; and the Elder
spake:

"Will He forget me? Would He
might forget!

Old, old! The hope of old Methuse-
lah

Is all in His forgetfulness." With
that,

A slave-girl took a cup of wine, and
crept

Anear him, saying, "Taste;" and
when his lips

Had touched it, lo, he trembled, and
he cried,

"Behold, I prophesy."

Then straight they fled
That were about him, and did stand
apart

And stop their ears. For he, from
time to time,

Was plagued with that same fate to
prophecy,

And spake against himself, against his
day

And time, in words that all men did
abhor.

Therefore, he, warning them what time
the fit

Came on him, saved them, that they
heard it not.

So while they fled, he cried: "I saw
the God

Reach out of heaven His wonderful
right hand.

Lo, lo! He dipped it in the unquiet
sea,

And in its curvèd palm behold the ark,
As in a vast calm lake, came floating
on.

Ay, then, His other hand — the cursing
hand —

He took and spread between us and the
sun,

And all was black; the day was blotted
out,

And horrible staggering took the
frighted earth.

I heard the water hiss, and then me-
thinks

The crack as of her splitting. Did
she take

Their palaces that are my brothers
dear,

And huddle them with all their an-
cienry

Under into her breast? If it was black,
How could this old man see? There

was a noise

I' the dark, and He drew back His
hand again.

I looked — It was a dream, — let
no man say

It was aught else. There, so — the fit
goes by.

Sir, and my daughters, is it eventide? —
Sooner than that, saith old Methu-
selah,

Let the vulture lay his beak to my
green limbs.

What! art Thou envious? — are the
sons of men

Too wise to please Thee, and to do Thy
will?

Methuselah, he sitteth on the ground,
Clad in his gown of age, the pale white

gown,

And goeth not forth to war; his
wrinkled hands

He claspeth round his knees: old,
very old.

Would he could steal from Thee one
secret more —

The secret of Thy youth! O, envious
God!

We die. The words of old Methuselah
And his prophecy are ended."

Then the wives,
Beholding how he trembled, and the
maids

And children, came anear, saying,
"Who art thou

That standest gazing on the Elder? Lo,
Thou dost not well: withdraw; for it

was thou

Whose stranger presence troubled him,
and brought

The fit of prophecy." And he did
turn

To look upon them, and their majesty
And glorious beauty took away his

words;
And, being pure among the vile, he
cast

In his thought a veil of snow-white
purity

Over the beauteous throng. "Thou
dost not well,"
They said. He answered: "Blossoms
o' the world,
Fruitful as fair, never in watered glade,
Where in the youngest grass blue cups
push forth,
And the white lily reareth up her head,
And purples cluster, and the saffron
flower,
Clear as a flame of sacrifice, breaks out,
And every cedar-bough, made delicate
With climbing roses, drops in white
and red, —
Saw I (good angels keep you in their
care)
So beautiful a crowd."

With that they stamped,
Gnashed their white teeth, and, turn-
ing, fled and spat
Upon the floor. The Elder spake to
him,
Yet shaking with the burden, "Who
art thou?"
He answered: "I, the man whom thou
didst send
To fetch through this thy woodland, do
forbear
To tell my name; thou lovest it not,
great sire, —
No, nor mine errand. To thy house
I spake,
Touching their beauty." "Wherefore
didst thou spite,"
Quoth he, "the daughters?" and it
seemed he lost
Count of that prophecy, for very age,
And from his thin lips dropt a trembling
laugh.
"Wicked old man," quoth he, "this
wise old man
I see as 't were not I. Thou bad old
man,
What shall be done to thee? for thou
didst burn
Their babes, and strew the ashes all
about,
To rid the world of His white soldiers.
Ay,
Scenting of human sacrifice, they fled.
Cowards! I heard them winnow their
great wings:

They went to tell Him; but they came
no more.
The women hate to hear of them, so
sore
They grudged their little ones; and
yet no way
There was but that. I took it; I did
well."

With that he fell to weeping. "Son,"
said he,
"Long have I hid mine eyes from stal-
wart men,
For it is hard to lose the majesty
And pride and power of manhood: but
to-day,
Stand forth into the light, that I may
look
Upon thy strength, and think, EVEN
THUS DID I,
IN THE GLORY OF MY YOUTH, MORE
LIKE TO GOD
THAN LIKE HIS SOLDIERS, FACE THE
VASSAL WORLD."

Then Noah stood forward in his maj-
esty,
Shouldering the golden billhook, where-
withal
He wont to cut his way, when tangled
in
The matted hayes. And down the
opened roof
Fell slanting beams upon his stately
head,
And streamed along his gown, and
made to shine
The jewelled sandals on his feet.

And, lo,
The Elder cried aloud: "I prophesy.
Behold, my son is as a fruitful field
When all the lands are waste. The
archers drew, —
They drew the bow against him; they
were fain
To slay: but he shall live, — my son
shall live,
And I shall live by him in the other
days.
Behold the prophet of the Most High
God:
Hear him. Behold the hope o' the
world, what time

She lieth under. Hear him; he shall
 save
 A seed alive, and sow the earth with
 man.
 O earth! earth! earth! a floating shell
 of wood
 Shall hold the remnant of thy mighty
 lords.
 Will this old man be in it? Sir, and
 you,
 My daughters, hear him! Lo, this
 white old man
 He sitteth on the ground. (Let be, let
 be:
 Why dost Thou trouble us to make our
 tongue
 Ring with abhorred words?) The pro-
 phecy
 Of the Elder, and the vision that he
 saw,
 They both are ended."

Then said Noah: "The life
 Of this my lord is low for very age:
 Why, then, with bitter words upon thy
 tongue,
 Father of Lamech, dost thou anger
 Him?
 Thou canst not strive against Him
 now." He said:
 "Thy feet are toward the valley, where
 lie bones
 Bleaching upon the desert. Did I love
 The lithe strong lizards that I yoked
 and set
 To draw my car? and were they not
 possessed?
 Yea, all of them were liars. I loved
 them well.
 What did the Enemy, but on a day
 When I behind my talking team went
 forth,
 They sweetly lying, so that all men
 praised
 Their flattering tongues and mild per-
 suasive eyes,—
 What did the Enemy but send His
 slaves,
 Angels, to cast down stones upon their
 heads
 And break them? Nay, I could not
 stir abroad
 But havoc came; they never crept or
 flew

Beyond the shelter that I builded
 here,
 But straight the crowns I had set upon
 their heads
 Were marks for myrmidons that in the
 clouds
 Kept watch to crush them. Can a man
 forgive
 That hath been warred on thus? I will
 not. Nay,
 I swear it,—I, the man Methuselah."
 The Master-shipwright, he replied,
 "T is true,
 Great loss was that; but they that stood
 thy friends,
 The wicked spirits, spoke upon their
 tongues,
 And cursed the God of heaven. What
 marvel, sir,
 If He was angered?" But the Elder
 cried:
 "They all are dead,—the toward
 beasts I loved;
 My goodly team, my joy, they all are
 dead;
 Their bones lie bleaching in the wilder-
 ness:
 And I will keep my wrath for ever-
 more
 Against the Enemy that slew them. Go,
 Thou coward servant of a tyrant King,
 Go down the desert of the bones, and
 ask,
 'My King, what bones are these? Me-
 thuselah,
 The white old man that sitteth on the
 ground,
 Sendeth a message, "Bid them that
 they live,
 And let my lizards run up every path
 They wont to take when out of silver
 pipes,
 The pipes that Tubal wrought into my
 roof,
 I blew a sweeter cry than song-bird's
 throat
 Hath ever formed; and while they laid
 their heads
 Submiss upon my threshold, poured
 away
 Music that welled by heartsful out, and
 made
 The throats of men that heard to swell,
 their breasts

To heave with the joy of grief; yea,
caused the lips
To laugh of men asleep.

Return to me
The great wise lizards; ay, and them
that flew
My pursuivants before me. Let me
yoke
Again that multitude; and here I
swear
That they shall draw my car and me
thereon
Straight to the ship of doom. So men
shall know
My loyalty, that I submit, and Thou
Shalt yet have honor, O mine Enemy,
By me. The speech of old Methuse-
lah.””

Then Noah made answer, “By the
living God,
That is no enemy to men, great sire,
I will not take thy message; hear thou
Him.

‘Behold (He saith that suffereth thee),
behold,

The earth that I made green cries out
to Me,

Red with the costly blood of beauteous
man.

I am robbed, I am robbed (He saith);
they sacrifice

To evil demons of My blameless flocks,
That I did fashion with My hand.

Behold,
How goodly was the world! I gave it
thee

Fresh from its finishing. What hast
thou done?

I will cry out to the waters, *Cover it,*
And hide it from its Father. Lo,
Mine eyes

Turn from it shamed.’”

With that the old man laughed
Full softly. “Ay,” quoth he, “a
goodly world,

And we have done with it as we did
list.

Why did he give it us? Nay, look
you, son:

Five score they were that died in yon-
der waste;

And if He crieth, ‘Repent, be recon-
ciled,’

I answer, ‘Nay, my lizards;’ and
again,

If He will trouble me in this mine age,
‘Why hast Thou slain my lizards?’

Now my speech
Is cut away from all my other words,

Standing alone. The Elder sweareth
it,

The man of many days, Methuselah.”

Then answered Noah, “My Master,
hear it not;

But yet have patience;” and he turned
himself,

And down betwixt the ordered trees
went forth,

And in the light of evening made his
way

Into the waste to meet the Voice of
God.

BOOK III.

ABOVE the head of great Methuselah
There lay two demons in the opened
roof

Invisible, and gathered up his words;
For when the Elder prophesied, it
came

About, that hidden things were shown
to them,

And burdens that he spake against his
time.

(But never heard them, such as dwelt
with him;

Their ears they stopped, and willed to
live at ease

In all delight; and perfect in their
youth,

And strong, disport them in the perfect
world.)

Now these were fettered that they
could not fly,

For a certain disobedience they had
wrought

Against the ruler of their host; but not
The less they loved their cause; and
when the feet

O’ the Master-builder were no longer
heard,

They, slipping to the sward, right painfully
 Did follow, for the one to the other
 said,
 "Behoooves our master know of this ;
 and us,
 Should he be favorable, he may loose
 From these our bonds."

And thus it came to pass,
 That while at dead of night the old
 dragon lay
 Coiled in the cavern where he dwelt,
 the watch
 Pacing before it saw in middle air
 A boat, that gleamed like fire, and on
 it came,
 And rocked as it drew near, and then
 it burst
 And went to pieces, and there fell there-
 from,
 Close at the cavern's mouth, two glow-
 ing balls.

Now there was drawn a curtain nigh
 the mouth
 Of that deep cave, to testify of wrath.
 The dragon had been wroth with some
 that served,
 And chased them from him ; and his
 oracles,
 That wont to drop from him, were
 stopped, and men
 Might only pray to him through that
 fell web
 That hung before him. Then did
 whisper low
 Some of the little spirits that, bat-like,
 clung
 And cluster'd round the opening.
 "Lo," they said,
 While gazed the watch upon those
 glowing balls,
 "These are like moons eclipsed ; but
 let them lie
 Red on the moss, and sear its dewy
 spires,
 Until our lord give leave to draw the
 web,
 And quicken reverence by his presence
 dread,
 For he will know and call to them by
 name,

And they will change. At present he
 is sick,
 And wills that none disturb him." So
 they lay,
 And there was silence, for the forest
 tribes
 Came never near that cave. Wiser
 than men,
 They fled the serpent hiss that oft by
 night
 Came forth of it, and feared the wan
 dusk forms
 That stalked among the trees, and in
 the dark
 Those whiffs of flame that wandered up
 the sky
 And made the moonlight sickly.

Now, the cave
 Was marvellous for beauty, wrought
 with tools
 Into the living rock, for there had
 worked
 All cunning men, to cut on it with signs
 And shows, yea, all the manner of man-
 kind.
 The fateful apple-tree was there, a
 bough
 Bent with the weight of him that us
 beguiled ;
 And lilies of the field did seem to blow
 And bud in the storied stone. There
 Tubal sat,
 Who from his harp delivered music,
 sweet
 As any in the spheres. Yea, more ;
 Earth's latest wonder on the walls ap-
 peared,
 Unfinished, workmen clustering on its
 ribs ;
 And farther back, within the rock
 hewn out,
 Angelic figures stood, that impious
 hands
 Had fashioned ; many golden lamps
 they held
 By golden chains depending, and their
 eyes
 All tended in a reverent quietude
 Toward the couch whereon the dragon
 lay.
 The floor was beaten gold ; the curly
 lengths

Of his last coils lay on it, hid from
 sight
 With a coverlet made stiff with crust-
 ing gems,
 Fire-opals shooting, rubies, fierce bright
 eyes
 Of diamonds, or the pale green emer-
 ald,
 That changed their lustre when he
 breathed.

His head,
 Feathered with crimson combs, and all
 his neck,
 And half-shut fans of his admired
 wings,
 That in their scaly splendor put to
 shame
 Or gold or stone, lay on his ivory couch
 And shivered; for the dragon suffered
 pain:
 He suffered and he feared. It was his
 doom,
 The tempter, that he never should de-
 part
 From the bright creature that in Para-
 dise
 He for his evil purpose erst possessed,
 Until it died. Thus only, spirit of
 might
 And chiefest spirit of ill, could he be
 free.

But with its nature wed, as souls of
 men
 Are wedded to their clay, he took the
 dread
 Of death and dying, and the coward
 heart
 Of the beast, and craven terrors of the
 end
 Sank him that habited within it to
 dread
 Disunion. He, a dark dominion erst
 Rebellious, lay and trembled, for the
 flesh
 Daunted his immaterial. He was sick
 And sorry. Great ones of the earth
 had sent
 Their chief musicians for to comfort
 him,
 Chanting his praise, the friend of man,
 the god
 That gave them knowledge, at so great
 a price

And costly. Yea, the riches of the
 mine,
 And glorious brodered work, and woven
 gold,
 And all things wisely made, they at his
 feet
 Laid daily; for they said, "This
 mighty one,
 All the world wonders after him. He
 lieth
 Sick in his dwelling; he hath long fore-
 gone
 (To do us good) dominion, and a throne,
 And his brave warfare with the Enemy,
 So much he pitieth us that were denied
 The gain and gladness of this knowl-
 edge. Now
 Shall he be certified of gratitude,
 And smell the sacrifice that most he
 loves."

The night was dark, but every lamp
 gave forth
 A tender, lustrous beam. His beau-
 teous wings
 The dragon fluttered, cursed awhile,
 then turned
 And moaned with lamentable voice, "I
 thirst,
 Give me to drink." Thereon stepped
 out in haste,
 From inner chambers, lovely minis-
 trants,
 Young boys, with radiant locks and
 peaceful eyes,
 And poured out liquor from their cups
 to cool
 His parched tongue, and kneeling held
 it high
 In jewelled basins sparkling; and he
 lapped,
 And was appeased, and said, "I will
 not hide
 Longer my much-desired face from
 men.
 Draw back the web of separation."
 Then
 With cries of gratulation ran they forth,
 And flung it wide, and all the watch fell
 low,
 Each on his face, as drunk with sudden
 joy.
 Thus marked he, glowing on the
 branched moss,

Those red rare moons, and let his serpent eyes
Consider them full subtly, "What be these?"

Inquiring: and the little spirits said,
"As we for thy protection (having heard

That wrathful sons of darkness walk to-night,

Such as do oft ill-use us) clustered here,
We marked a boat afire, that sailed the skies,

And furrowed up like spray a billowy cloud,

And lo, it went to pieces, scattering down

A rain of sparks and these two angry moons."

Then said the dragon, "Let my guard, and you,

Attendant hosts, recede;" and they went back,

And formed about the cave a widening ring,

Then, halting, stood afar; and from the cave

The snaky wonder spoke, with hissing tongue,

"If ye were Tartis and Deleisonon,
Be Tartis and Deleisonon once more."

Then egg-like cracked the glowing balls, and forth

Started black angels, trampling hard to free

Their fettered feet from out the smoking shell.

And he said, "Tartis and Deleisonon,
Your lord I am: draw nigh." "Thou art our lord,"

They answered, and with fettered limbs full low

They bent, and made obeisance. Furthermore,

"O fiery flying serpent, after whom
The nations go, let thy dominion last,"

They said, "forever." And the serpent said,

"It shall: unfold your errand." They replied,

One speaking for a space, and afterwards

His fellow taking up the word with fear,

And panting, "We were set to watch the mouth

Of great Methuselah. There came to him

The son of Lamech two days since."

"My lord,

They prophesied, the Elder prophesied,
Unwitting, of the flood of waters, — ay,

A vision was before him, and the lands
Lay under water drowned. He saw the ark, —

It floated in the Enemy's right hand."
"Lord of the lost, the son of Lamech fled

Into the wilderness to meet His voice
That reigneth; and we, diligent to hear

Aught that might serve thee, followed, but, forbid

To enter, lay upon its boundary cliff,
And wished for morning."

"When the dawn was red
We sought the man, we marked him;
and he prayed, —

Kneeling, he prayed in the valley, and he said —"

"Nay," quoth the serpent, "spare me, what devout

He fawning grovelled to the All-powerful;

But if of what shall hap he aught let fall,
Speak that." They answered, "He did pray as one

That looketh to outlive mankind, — and more,

We are certified by all his scattered words,

That HE will take from men their length of days,

And cut them off like grass in its first flower:

From henceforth this shall be."

That when he heard,
The dragon made to the night his moan.

"And more,"
They said, "that He above would have men know

That He doth love them, whoso will repent,

To that man He is favorable, yea,
Will be his loving Lord."

The dragon cried,
"The last is worse than all. O man,
thy heart
Is stout against His wrath. But will
He love?
I heard 'it rumored in the heavens of
old
(And doth He love?). Thou wilt not,
canst not, stand
Against the love of God. Dominion
fails;
I see it float from me, that long have
worn
Fetters of flesh to win it. Love of
God!
I cry against thee; thou art worse than
all."

They answered, "Be not moved, ad-
mired chief
And trusted of mankind;" and they
went on,
And fed him with the prophecies that
fell
From the Master-shipwright in his
prayer.

But prone
He lay, for he was sick: at every word
Prophetic cowering. As a bruising
blow,
It fell upon his head and daunted him,
Until they ended, saying, "Prince, be-
hold,
Thy servants have revealed the whole."

Thereon
He out of snaky lips did hiss forth
thanks.
Then said he, "Tartis and Deleisonon,
Receive your wages." So their fetters
fell;
And they, retiring, lauded him, and
cried,
"King, reign forever." Then he
mourned, "Amen."

And he,—being left alone,—he said:
"A light!
I see a light,—a star among the trees,—
An angel." And it drew toward the
cave,

But with its sacred feet touched not
the grass,
Nor lifted up the lids of its pure eyes,
But hung a span's length from that
ground pollute,
At the opening of the cave.

And when he looked,
The dragon cried, "Thou newly-
fashioned thing,
Of name unknown, thy scorn becomes
thee not.
Doth not thy Master suffer what thine
eyes
Thou countest all too clean to open
on?"
But still it hovered, and the quietness
Of holy heaven was on the drooping
lids;
And not as one that answereth, it let
fall
The music from its mouth, but like to
one
That doth not hear, or, hearing, doth
not heed.

"A message: 'I have heard thee,
while remote
I went My rounds among the unfinished
stars.'
A message: 'I have left thee to thy
ways,
And mastered all thy vileness, for thy
hate
I have made to serve the ends of My
great love.
Hereafter will I chain thee down. To-
day
One thing thou art forbidden; now
thou knowest
The name thereof: I told it thee in
heaven,
When thou wert sitting at My feet.
Forbear
To let that hidden thing be whispered
forth:
For man, ungrateful (and thy hope it
was,
That so ungrateful he might prove),
would scorn,
And not believe it, adding so fresh
weight
Of condemnation to the doomed world.

Concerning that, thou art forbid to
 speak ;
 Know thou didst count it, falling from
 My tongue,
 A lovely song, whose meaning was
 unknown,
 Unknowable, unbearable to thought,
 But sweeter in the hearing than all
 harps
 Toned in My holy hollow. Now
 thine ears
 Are opened, know it, and discern and
 fear,
 Forbearing speech of it for evermore."

So said, it turned, and with a cry of
 joy,
 As one released, went up : and it was
 dawn,
 And all boughs dropped with dew, and
 out of mist
 Came the red sun and looked into the
 cave.

But the dragon, left a-tremble, called
 to him,
 From the nether kingdom, certain of
 his friends, —
 Three whom he trusted, councillors
 accursed.
 A thunder-cloud stooped low and
 swathed the place
 In its black swirls, and out of it they
 rushed,
 And hid them in recesses of the cave,
 Because they could not look upon the
 sun,
 Sith light is pure. And Satan called
 to them, —
 All in the dark, in his great rage he
 spake :
 "Up," quoth the dragon ; "it is time
 to work,
 Or we are all undone." And he did
 hiss,
 And there came shudderings over land
 and trees,
 A dimness after dawn. The earth
 threw out
 A blinding fog, that crept toward the
 cave,
 And rolled up blank before it like a
 veil, —

A curtain to conceal its habiter.
 Then did those spirits move upon the
 floor,
 Like pillars of darkness, and with eyes
 aglow.
 One had a helm for covering of the
 scars
 'That seamed what rested of a goodly
 face ;
 He wore his vizor up, and all his words
 Were hollower than an echo from the
 hills :
 He was hight Make. And lo, his fel-
 low-fiend
 Came after, holding down his dastard
 head,
 Like one ashamed : now this for craft
 was great ;
 The dragon honored him. A third sat
 down
 Among them, covering with his wasted
 hand
 Somewhat that pained his breast.

And when the fit
 Of thunder, and the sobbings of the
 wind,
 Were lulled, the dragon spoke with
 wrath and rage,
 And told them of his matters : "Look
 to this,
 If ye be loyal ;" adding, "Give your
 thoughts,
 And let me have your counsel in this
 need."

One spirit rose and spake, and all the
 cave
 Was full of sighs, "The words of
 Make the Prince,
 Of him once delegate in Betelgeux :
 Whereas of late the manner is to
 change,
 We know not where 'twill end ; and
 now my words
 Go thus : give way, be peaceable, lie
 still
 And strive not, else the world that we
 have won
 He may, to drive us out, reduce to
 naught.

"For while I stood in mine obedience
 yet,

Steering of Betelgeux my sun, behold,
 A moon, that evil ones did fill, rolled
 up
 Astray, and suddenly the Master came,
 And while, a million strong, like rooks
 they rose,
 He took and broke it, flung it here and
 there,
 And called a blast to drive the powder
 forth;
 And it was fine as dust, and blurred
 the skies
 Farther than 'tis from hence to this
 young sun.
 Spirits that passed upon their work that
 day,
 Cried out, "How dusty 'tis." Be-
 hooves us, then,
 That we depart, as leaving unto Him
 This goodly world and goodly race of
 man.
 Not all are doomed: hereafter it may
 be
 That we find place on it again. But if,
 Too zealous to preserve it, and the
 men
 Our servants, we oppose Him, He may
 come,
 And, choosing rather to undo His work
 Than strive with it for aye, make so an
 end."
 He sighing paused. Lo, then the ser-
 pent hissed
 In impotent rage, "Depart! and how
 depart!
 Can flesh be carried down where spirits
 wonn?
 Or I, most miserable, hold my life
 Over the airless, bottomless gulf, and
 bide
 The buffetings of yonder shoreless sea?
 O death, thou terrible doom: O death,
 thou dread
 Of all that breathe."

A spirit rose and spake:
 "Whereas in Heaven is power, is much
 to fear;
 For this admired country we have
 marred.
 Whereas in Heaven is love (and there
 are days
 When yet I can recall what love was
 like),

Is naught to fear. A threatening makes
 the whole,
 And clogged with strong conditions:
 'O, repent,
 Man, and I turn.' He, therefore,
 powerful now,
 And more so, master, that ye bide in
 clay,
 Threateneth that He may save. They
 shall not die."

The dragon said, "I tremble, I am
 sick."
 He said with pain of heart, "How am
 I fallen!
 For I keep silence; yea, I have with-
 drawn
 From haunting of His gates, and shout-
 ing up
 Defiance. Wherefore doth He hunt me
 out
 From this small world, this little one,
 that I
 Have been content to take unto myself,
 I here being loved and worshippèd?
 He knoweth
 How much I have foregone; and must
 He stoop
 To whelm the world, and heave the
 floors o' the deep,
 Of purpose to pursue me from my
 place?
 And since I gave men knowledge, must
 He take
 Their length of days whereby they per-
 fect it?
 So shall He scatter all that I have
 stored,
 And get them by degrading them. I
 know
 That in the end it is appointed me
 To fade. I will not fade before the
 time."

A spirit rose, the third, a spirit
 ashamed
 And subtle, and his face he turned
 aside:
 "Whereas," said he, "we strive
 against both power
 And love, behooves us that we strive
 aright.
 Now some of old my comrades yester-
 day

I met, as they did journey to appear
 In the Presence; and I said, 'My
 master lieth
 Sick yonder, otherwise (for no decree
 'There stands against it) he would also
 come
 And make obeisance with the sons of
 God.'
 They answered, naught denying.
 Therefore, lord,
 'T is certain that ye have admittance
 yet;
 And what doth hinder? Nothing but
 this breath.
 Were it not well to make an end, and
 die,
 And gain admittance to the King of
 kings?
 What if thy slaves by thy consent
 should take
 And bear thee on their wings above
 the earth,
 And suddenly let fall,—how soon
 't were o'er!
 We should have fear and sinking at the
 heart;
 But in a little moment we should see,
 Rising majestic from a ruined heap,
 The stately spirit that we served of
 yore."

The serpent turned his subtle deadly
 eyes
 Upon the spirit, and hissed; and, sick
 with shame,
 It bowed itself together, and went back
 With hidden face. "This counsel is
 not good,"
 The other twain made answer; "look,
 my lord,
 Whereas 'tis evil in thine eyes, in
 ours
 'Tis evil also; speak, for we perceive
 That on thy tongue the words of coun-
 sel sit,
 Ready to fly to our right greedy ears,
 That long for them." And Satan, flat-
 tered thus
 (For ever may the serpent kind be
 charmed
 With soft, sweet words, and music
 deftly played),
 Replied, "Whereas I surely rule the
 world,

Behooves that ye prepare for me a
 path,
 And that I, putting of my pains
 aside,
 Go stir rebellion in the mighty hearts
 O' the giants; for He loveth them, and
 looks
 Full oft complacent on their glorious
 strength.
 He willeth that they yield, that He
 may spare;
 But, by the blackness of my loathed
 den,
 I say they shall not, no, they shall not
 yield;
 Go, therefore, take to you some harm-
 less guise,
 And spread a rumor that I come. I,
 sick,
 Sorry, and aged, hasten. I have heard
 Whispers that out of heaven dropped
 unaware.
 I caught them up, and sith they bode
 men harm,
 I am ready for to comfort them; yea,
 more,
 To counsel, and I will that they drive
 forth
 The women, the abhorred of my soul;
 Let not a woman breathe where I shall
 pass,
 Lest the curse falleth, and she bruise
 my head.
 Friends, if it be their mind to send for
 me
 An army, and triumphant draw me on
 In the golden car you wot of, and with
 shouts,
 I would not that ye hinder them. Ah,
 then
 Will I make hard their hearts, and
 grieve Him sore
 That loves them, O, by much too well
 to wet
 Their stately heads, and soil those
 locks of strength
 Under the fateful brine. Then after-
 ward,
 While He doth reason vainly with
 them, I
 Will offer Him a pact: 'Great King, a
 pact,
 And men shall worship Thee, I say
 they shall,

For I will bid them do it, yea, and
leave
To sacrifice their kind, so Thou my
name
Wilt suffer to be worshipped after
'Thine.'"

"Yea, my lord Satan," quoth they,
"do this thing,
And let us hear thy words, for they are
sweet."

Then he made answer, "By a mes-
senger

Have I this day been warned. There
is a deed

I may not tell of, lest the people add
Scorn of a Coming Greatness to their
faults.

Why this? Who careth, when about
to slay,

And slay indeed, how well they have
deserved

Death whom he slayeth? Therefore
yet is hid

A meaning of some mercy that will rob
The nether world. Now look to it, —

'Twere vain,
Albeit this deluge He would send in-
deed,

That we expect the harvest; He
would yet

Be the Master-reaper; for I heard it
said,

Them that be young and know Him
not, and them

That are bound and may not build, yea,
more, their wives,

Whom, suffering not to hear the doom,
they keep

Joyous behind the curtains, every one
With maidens nourished in the house,
and babes

And children at her knees — (then what
remain!)

He claimeth and will gather for His
own.

Now, therefore, it were good by guile
to work,

Princes, and suffer not the doom to
fall.

There is no evil like to love. I heard
Him whisper it. Have I put on this
flesh

To ruin His two children beautiful,
And shall my deed confound me in the
end,
Through awful imitation? Love of
God,
I cry against thee; thou art worst of
all."

BOOK IV.

Now while these evil ones took coun-
sel strange,

The son of Lamech journeyed home;
and, lo!

A company came down, and struck the
track

As he did enter it. There rode in
front

Two horsemen, young and noble, and
behind

Were following slaves with tent gear;
others led

Strong horses, others bare the instru-
ments

O' the chase, and in the rear dull
camels lagged,

Sighing, for they were burdened, and
they loved

The desert sands above that grassy
vale.

And as they met, those horsemen drew
the rein,

And fixed on him their grave un-
troubled eyes;

He in his regal grandeur walked alone,
And had nor steed nor follower, and
his mien

Was grave and like to theirs. He
said to them,

"Fair sirs, whose are ye?" They
made answer cold,

"The beautiful woman, sir, our mother
dear,

Niloiya, bare us to great Lamech's
son."

And he, replying, "I am he." They
said,

"We knew it, sir. We have remem-
bered you

Through many seasons. Pray you let
us not;

We fain would greet our mother."

And they made

Obeisance and passed on; then all
 their train,
 Which while they spoke had halted,
 moved apace,
 And, while the silent father stood,
 went by,
 He gazing after, as a man that dreams;
 For he was sick with their cold, quiet
 scorn,
 That seemed to say, "Father, we own
 you not,
 We love you not, for you have left us
 long, —
 So long, we care not that you come
 again."

And while the sullen camels moved, he
 spake
 To him that led the last, "There are
 but two
 Of these my sons; but where doth
 Japhet ride?
 For I would see him." And the leader
 said,
 "Sir, ye shall find him, if ye follow up
 Along the track. Afore the noonday
 meal
 The young men, even our masters,
 bathed; (there grows
 A clump of cedars by the bend of yon
 Clear river) — there did Japhet, after
 meat,
 Being right weary, lay him down and
 sleep.
 There, with a company of slaves and
 some
 Few camels, ye shall find him."

And the man,
 The father of these three, did let him
 pass,
 And struggle and give battle to his
 heart,
 Standing as motionless as pillar set
 To guide a wanderer in a pathless
 waste;
 But all his strength went from him, and
 he strove
 Vainly to trample out and trample
 down
 The misery of his love unsatisfied, —
 Unutterable love flung in his face.

Then he broke out in passionate words,
 that cried
 Against his lot: "I have lost my own,
 and won
 None other; no, not one! Alas, my
 sons!
 That I have looked to for my solacing,
 In the bitterness to come. My children
 dear!"
 And when from his own lips he heard
 those words,
 With passionate stirring of the heart,
 he wept.

And none came near to comfort him.
 His face
 Was on the ground; but having wept,
 he rose
 Full hastily, and urged his way to find
 The river; and in hollow of his hand
 Raised up the water to his brow:
 "This son,
 This other son of mine," he said,
 "shall see
 No tears upon my face." And he
 looked on,
 Beheld the camels, and a group of slaves
 Sitting apart from some one fast asleep,
 Where they had spread out webs of
 broidery work
 Under a cedar-tree; and he came on,
 And when they made obeisance he de-
 clared [son
 His name, and said, "I will beside my
 Sit till he wakeneth." So Japhet lay
 A-dreaming, and his father drew to
 him.
 He said, "This cannot scorn me yet;"
 and paused,
 Right angry with himself, because the
 youth,
 Albeit of stately growth, so languidly
 Lay with a listless smile upon his
 mouth,
 That was full sweet and pure; and as
 he looked,
 He half forgot his trouble in his pride.
 "And is this mine?" said he, "my
 son! mine own!
 (God, thou art good!) O, if this turn
 away,
 That pang shall be past bearing. I
 must think

That all the sweetness of his goodly
face
Is copied from his soul. How beautiful
Are children to their fathers! Son, my
heart
Is greatly glad because of thee; my
life
Shall lack of no completeness in the
days
To come. If I forget the joy of youth,
In thee shall I be comforted; ay, see
My youth, a dearer than my own
again."

And when he ceased, the youth, with
sleep content,
Murmured a little, turned himself, and
woke.

He woke, and opened on his father's
face
The darkness of his eyes; but not a
word

The Master-shipwright said, — his lips
were sealed;

He was not ready, for he feared to see
This mouth curl up with scorn. And
Japhet spoke,
Full of the calm that cometh after
sleep:

"Sir, I have dreamed of you. I pray
you, sir,
What is your name?" and even with
his words

His countenance changed. The son of
Lamech said,

"Why art thou sad? What have I
done to thee?"

And Japhet answered, "O, methought
I fled

In the wilderness before a maddened
beast,

And you came up and slew it; and
I thought

You were my father; but I fear me,
sir,

My thoughts were vain." With that
his father said,

"Whate'er of blessing Thou reserv'st
for me,

God! if Thou wilt not give to both,
give here:

Bless him with both Thy hands;" and
laid his own
On Japhet's head.

Then Japhet looked on him,
Made quiet by content, and answered
low,
With faltering laughter, glad and reverent: "Sir,
You are my father?" "Ay," quoth
he, "I am!
Kiss me, my son; and let me hear my
name,
My much desired name, from your
dear lips."

Then after, rested, they betook them
home:

And Japhet, walking by the Master,
thought,

"I did not will to love this sire of
mine;

But now I feel as if I had always known
And loved him well; truly, I see not
why,

But I would rather serve him than go
free

With my two brethren." And he said
to him,

"Father!" — who answered, "I am
here, my son."

And Japhet said, "I pray you, sir, at-
tend

To this my answer: let me go with
you,

For, now I think on it, I do not love
The chase, nor managing the steed,
nor yet

The arrows and the bow; but rather
you,

For all you do and say, and you your-
self,

Are goodly and delightsome in mine
eyes.

I pray you, sir, when you go forth
again,

That I may also go." And he replied,
"I will tell thy speech unto the
Highest; He

Shall answer it. But I would speak to
thee

Now of the days to come. Know thou,
most dear

To this thy father, that the drenchèd
world,
When risen clean washed from water,
shall receive
From thee her lordliest governors, from
thee
Daughters of noblest soul."

So Japhet said,
"Sir, I am young, but of my mother
straight
I will go ask a wife, that this may be.
I pray you, therefore, as the man-
ner is

Of fathers, give me land that I may
reap
Corn for sustaining of my wife, and
bruise

The fruit of the vine to cheer her."

But he said,
"Dost thou forget? or dost thou not
believe,

My son?" He answered, "I did ne'er
believe,

My father, ere to-day; but now, me-
thinks,

Whatever thou believest I believe,
For thy beloved sake. If this then be
As thou (I hear) hast said, and earth
doth bear

The last of her wheat harvests, and
make ripe

The latest of her grapes; yet hear me,
sir,

None of the daughters shall be given to
me

If I be landless." Then his father
said,

"Lift up thine eyes toward the north,
my son;"

And so he did. "Behold thy heri-
tage!"

Quoth the world's prince and master,
"far away

Upon the side o' the north, where
green the field

Lies every season through, and where
the dews

Of heaven are wholesome, shall thy
children reign;

I part it to them, for the earth is mine;
The Highest gave it me: I make it
theirs.

Moreover, for thy marriage gift, behold

The cedars where thou sleepest!
There are vines;
And up the rise is growing wheat. I
give
(For all, alas! is mine), — I give thee
both
For dowry, and my blessing."

And he said,
"Sir, you are good, and therefore the
Most High
Shall bless me also. Sir, I love you
well."

BOOK V.

AND when two days were over, Japhet
said,

"Mother, so please you, get a wife for
me."

The mother answered, "Dost thou
mock me, son?"

'T is not the manner of our kin to wed
So young. Thou knowest it; art thou
not ashamed?

Thou carest not for a wife." And the
youth blushed,

And made for answer: "This, my
father, saith

The doom is nigh; now, therefore, find
a maid,

Or else shall I be wifeless all my days.
And as for me, I care not; but the

lands
Are parted, and the goodliest share is
mine.

And lo! my brethren are betrothed;
their maids

Are with thee in the house. Then why
not mine?

Didst thou not diligently search for
these

Among the noblest born of all the
earth,

And bring them up? My sisters, dwell
they not

With women that bespake them for
their sons?

Now, therefore, let a wife be found for
me,

Fair as the day, and gentle to my will
As thou art to my father's." When

she heard,

Niloiya sighed, and answered, "It is well."
And Japhet went out from her presence.

Then
Quoth the great Master: "Wherefore sought ye not,
Woman, these many days, nor tired at all,
Till ye had found, a maiden for my son?

In this ye have done ill." Niloiya said:

"Let not my lord be angry. All my soul

Is sad: my lord hath walked afar so long,

That some despise thee; yea, our servants fail

Lately to bring their stint of corn and wood.

And, sir, thy household slaves do steal away

To thy great father, and our lands lie waste, —

None till them: therefore think the women scorn

To give me — whatsoever gems I send,
And goodly raiment (yea, I seek afar,

And sue with all desire and humbleness
Through every master's house, but no one gives) —

A daughter for my son." With that she ceased.

Then said the Master: "Some thou hast with thee,
Brought up among thy children, dutiful

And fair; thy father gave them for my slaves, —

Children of them whom he brought captive forth

From their own heritage." And she replied,

Right scornfully: "Shall Japhet wed a slave?"

Then said the Master: "He shall wed: look thou

To that. I say not he shall wed a slave;

But, by the might of One that made him mine,

I will not quit thee for my doomed way

Until thou wilt betroth him. Therefore, haste,

Beautiful woman, loved of me and mine,

To bring a maiden, and to say, 'Behold

A wife for Japhet.'" Then she answered, "Sir,

It shall be done."

And forth Niloiya sped.
She gathered all her jewels, — all she held

Of costly or of rich, — and went and spake

With some few slaves that yet abode with her,

For daily they were fewer; and went forth,

With fair and flattering words, among her feres,

And fain had wrought with them: and she had hope

That made her sick, it was so faint; and then

She had fear, and after she had certainty,

For all did scorn her. "Nay," they cried, "O fool!

If this be so, and on a watery world
Ye think to rock, what matters if a wife

Be free or bond? There shall be none to rule,

If she have freedom: if she have it not,
None shall there be to serve."

And she alit,
The time being done, desponding at her door,

And went behind a screen, where should have wrought

The daughters of the captives; but there wrought

One only, and this rose from off the floor,

Where she the river rush full deftly wove,

And made obeisance. Then Niloiya said,

"Where are thy fellows?" And the maid replied,

"Let not Niloiya, this my lady loved,
Be angry; they are fled since yester-
night."

Then said Niloiya, "Amarant, my
slave,
When have I called thee by thy name
before?"

She answered, "Lady, never;" and
she took
And spread her broidered robe before
her face.

Niloiya spoke thus: "I am come to
woe,
And thou to honor." Saying this, she
wept

Passionate tears; and all the damsel's
soul
Was full of yearning wonder, and her
robe

Slipped from her hand, and her right
innocent face

Was seen betwixt her locks of tawny
hair

That dropped about her knees, and her
two eyes,

Blue as the much-loved flower that rims
the beck,

Looked sweetly on Niloiya; but she
knew

No meaning in her words; and she
drew nigh,

And kneeled and said, "Will this my
lady speak?"

Her damsel is desirous of her words."

Then said Niloiya, "I, thy mistress,
sought

A wife for Japhet, and no wife is
found."

And yet again she wept with grief of
heart,

Saying, "Ah me, miserable! I must
give

A wife,—the Master willeth it,—a
wife,

Ah me! unto the high-born. He will
scorn

His mother and reproach me. I must
give—

None else have I to give—a slave—
even thee."

This further spake Niloiya: "I was
good,—

Had rue on thee, a tender sucking
child,

When they did tear thee from thy
mother's breast;

I fed thee, gave thee shelter, and I
taught

Thy hands all cunning arts that women
prize.

But out on me! my good is turned to
ill.

O Japhet, well beloved!" And she
rose up,

And did restrain herself, saying,
"Dost thou heed?"

Behold, this thing shall be." The
damsel sighed,

"Lady, I do." Then went Niloiya
forth.

And Amarant murmured in her deep
amaze,

"Shall Japhet's little children kiss my
mouth?"

And will he sometimes take them from
my arms,

And a most care for me for their sweet
sake?

I have not dared to think I loved him,
— now

I know it well: but O, the bitterness
For him!" And ending thus, the

damsel rose,
For Japhet entered. And she bowed
herself

Meekly and made obeisance, but her
blood

Ran cold about her heart, for all his
face

Was colored with his passion.

Japhet spoke:
He said "My father's slave;" and

she replied,
Low drooping her fair head, "My

master's son."

And after that a silence fell on them,
With trembling at her heart, and rage
at his.

And Japhet, mastered of his passion,
sat

And could not speak. O, cruel seemed
his fate,—

So cruel he that told it, so unkind.
His breast was full of wounded love
and wrath

Wrestling together ; and his eyes flashed
out
Indignant lights, as all amazed he took
The insult home that she had offered
him,
Who should have held his honor dear.

And, lo,
The misery choked him, and he cried
in pain,
"Go, get thee forth ;" but she, all
white and still,
Parted her lips to speak, and yet spake
not,
Nor moved. And Japhet rose up
passionate,
With lifted arm as one about to strike ;
But she cried out and met him, and
she held
With desperate might his hand, and
prayed to him,
"Strike not, or else shall men from
henceforth say,
'Japhet is like to us.'" And he shook
off
The damsel, and he said, "I thank
thee, slave ;
For never have I stricken yet or child
Or woman. Not for thy sake am I
glad,
Nay, but for mine. Get hence. Obey
my words."
Then Japhet lifted up his voice, and
wept.

And no more he restrained himself,
but cried,
With heavings of the heart, "O hateful
day!
O day that shuts the door upon de-
light!
A slave! to wed a slave! O loathed
wife,
Hated of Japhet's soul." And after,
long,
With face between his hands, he sat,
his thoughts
Sullen and sore ; then scorned himself,
and saying,
"I will not take her, I will die unwed,
It is but that ;" lift up his eyes and
saw
The slave, and she was sitting at his
feet

And he, so greatly wondering that she
dared
The disobedience, looked her in the face
Less angry than afraid, for pale she
was
As lily yet unsmiled on by the sun ;
And he, his passion being spent, sighed
out,
"Low am I fallen indeed. Hast thou
no fear,
That thou dost flout me?" but she
gave to him
The sighing echo of his sigh, and
mourned,
"No."

And he wondered, and he looked
again,
For in her heart there was a new-born
pang,
That cried ; but she, as mothers with
their young,
Suffered, yet loved it ; and there shone
a strange
Grave sweetness in her blue unsullied
eyes.
And Japhet, leaning from the settle,
thought,
"What is it? I will call her by her
name,
To comfort her, for also she is naught
To blame ; and since I will not her to
wife,
She falls back from the freedom she
had hoped."
Then he said, "Amarant ;" and the
damsel drew
Her eyes down slowly from the shaded
sky
Of even, and she said, "My master's
son,
Japhet ;" and Japhet said, "I am not
wroth
With thee, but wretched for my mother's
deed,
Because she shamed me."

And the maiden said,
"Doth not thy father love thee well,
sweet sir?"
"Ay," quoth he, "well." She an-
swered, "Let the heart
Of Japhet, then, be merry. Go to
him

And say, 'The damsel whom my mother
 chose
 Sits by her in the house; but as for
 me,
 Sir, ere I take her, let me go with you
 To that same outland country. Also,
 sir,
 My damsel hath not worked as yet the
 robe
 Of her betrothal;' now, then, sith he
 loves,
 He will not say thee nay. Herein for
 a while
 Is respite, and thy mother far and near
 Will seek again: it may be she will find
 A fair, free maiden.'

Japhet said, "O maid,
 Sweet are thy words; but what if I
 return,
 And all again be as it is to-day?"
 Then Amarant answered, "Some have
 died in youth;
 But yet, I think not, sir, that I shall
 die.
 Though ye shall find it even as I had
 died, —
 Silent, for any words I might have
 said;
 Empty, for any space I might have
 filled.
 Sir, I will steal away, and hide afar;
 But if a wife be found, then will I bide
 And serve." He answered, "O, thy
 speech is good;
 Now, therefore (since my mother gave
 me thee),
 I will reward it; I will find for thee
 A goodly husband, and will make him
 free
 Thee also.'

Then she started from his feet,
 And, red with shame and anger, flashed
 on him
 The passion of her eyes; and put her
 hands
 With catching of the breath to her fair
 throat,
 And stood in her defiance lost to fear,
 Like some fair hind in desperate danger
 turned
 And brought to bay, and wild in her
 despair.

But shortly, "I remember," quoth she,
 low,
 With raining down of tears and broken
 sighs,
 "That I am Japhet's slave; beseech
 you, sir,
 As ye were ever gentle, ay, and sweet
 Of language to me, be not harder now.
 Sir, I was yours to take; I knew not,
 sir,
 That also ye might give me. Pray you,
 sir,
 Be pitiful, — be merciful to me,
 A slave." He said, "I thought to do
 thee good,
 For good hath been thy counsel;"
 but she cried,
 "Good master, be you therefore pitiful
 To me, a slave." And Japhet won-
 dered much
 At her, and at her beauty, for he
 thought,
 "None of the daughters are so fair as
 this,
 Nor stand with such a grace majesti-
 cal;
 She in her locks is like the travelling
 sun,
 Setting, all clad in coifing clouds of
 gold.
 And would she die unmatched?" He
 said to her,
 "What! wilt thou sail alone in yonder
 ship,
 And dwell alone hereafter?" "Ay,"
 she said,
 "And serve my mistress."

"It is well," quoth he,
 And held his hand to her, as is the
 way
 Of masters. Then she kissed it, and
 she said,
 "Thanks for benevolence," and turned
 herself,
 Adding, "I rest, sir, on your gracious
 words;"
 Then stepped into the twilight and was
 gone.

And Japhet, having found his father,
 said,
 "Sir, let me also journey when ye go."

Who answered, "Hath thy mother
done her part?"

He said, "Yea, truly, and my damsel
sits

Before her in the house ; and also, sir,
She said to me, ' I have not worked, as
yet,

The garment of betrothal.' " And he
said,

" 'Tis not the manner of our kin to
speak

Concerning matters that a woman rules ;
But hath thy mother brought a damsel
home,

And let her see thy face, then all is one
As ye were wed." He answered,

" Even so,

It matters nothing ; therefore hear me,
sir :

The damsel being mine, I am content
To let her do according to her will ;

And when we shall return, so surely,
sir,

As I shall find her by my mother's
side,

Then will I take her ; " and he left to
speak ;

His father answering, " Son, thy words
are good."

BOOK VI.

NIGHT. Now a tent was pitched, and
Japhet sat

In the door and watched, for on a litter
lay

The father of his love. And he was
sick

To death ; but daily he would rouse
him up,

And stare upon the light, and ever say,
" On, let us journey ; " but it came to

pass
That night, across their path a river
ran,

And they who served the father and
the son

Had pitched the tents beside it, and
had made

A fire, to scare away the savagery
That roamed in that great forest, for

their way
Had led among the trees of God.

The moon
Shone on the river, like a silver road
To lead them over ; but when Japhet
looked,

He said, " We shall not cross it. I
shall lay

This well-belovèd head low in the
leaves, —

Not on the farther side." From time
to time,

The water-snakes would stir its glassy
flow

With curling undulations, and would
lay

Their heads along the banks, and, sub-
tle-eyed,

Consider those long spiriting flames,
that danced,

When some red log would break and
crumble down,

And show his dark despondent eyes,
that watched,

Wearily, even Japhet's. But he cared
Little ; and in the dark, that was not

dark,

But dimness of confused incertitude,
Would move a-near all silently, and

gaze
And breathe, and shape itself, a manèd
thing

With eyes ; and still he cared not, and
the form

Would falter, then recede, and melt
again

Into the farther shade. And Japhet
said :

" How long ? The moon hath grown
again in heaven,

After her caving twice, since we did
leave

The threshold of our home ; and now
what 'vails

That far on tumbled mountain snow we
toiled,

Hungry, and weary, all the day ; by
night

Waked with a dreadful trembling un-
derneath,

To look, while every cone smoked, and
there ran

Red brooks adown, that licked the
forest up,

While in the pale white ashes wading
on

We saw no stars? — what 'vails if after-
ward,
Astonished with great silence, we did
move
Over the measureless, unknown desert
mead;
While all the day, in rents and crevices,
Would lie the lizard and the serpent
kind,
Drowsy; and in the night take fear-
some shapes,
And oftentimes woman-faced and wom-
an-haired
Would trail their snaky length, and
curse and mourn;
Or there would wander up, when we
were tired,
Dark troops of evil ones, with eyes
morose,
Withstanding us, and staring; — O,
what 'vails
That in the dread deep forest we have
fought
With following packs of wolves?
These men of might,
Even the giants, shall not hear the
doom
My father came to tell them of. Ah
me!
If God indeed had sent him, would he
lie
(For he is stricken with a sore disease)
Helpless outside their city?"

Then he rose,
And put aside the curtains of the tent,
To look upon his father's face; and lo!
The tent being dark, he thought that
somewhat sat
Beside the litter; and he set his eyes
To see it, and saw not; but only
marked
Where, fallen away from manhood and
from power,
His father lay. Then he came forth
again,
Trembling, and crouched beside the
dull red fire,
And murmured, "Now it is the second
time:
An old man, as I think (but scarcely
saw),
Dreadful of might. Its hair was white
as wool:

I dared not look; perhaps I saw not
aught,
But only knew that it was there: the
same
Which walked beside us once when he
did pray,"
And Japhet hid his face between his
hands
For fear, and grief of heart, and wear-
iness
Of watching; and he slumbered not,
but mourned
To himself, a little moment, as it
seemed,
For sake of his loved father; then he
lift
His eyes, and day had dawned. Right
suddenly
The moon withheld her silver, and she
hung
Frail as a cloud. The ruddy flame
that played
By night on dim, dusk trees, and on the
flood,
Crept red amongst the logs, and all the
world
And all the water blushed and bloomed.
The stars
Were gone, and golden shafts came up,
and touched
The feathered heads of palms, and
green was born
Under the rosy cloud, and purples flew
Like veils across the mountains; and
he saw,
Winding athwart them, bathed in bliss-
ful peace,
And the sacredness of morn, the battle-
ments
And outposts of the giants; and there
ran
On the other side the river, as it were,
White mounds of marble, tabernacles
fair,
And towers below a line of inland cliff:
These were their fastnesses, and here
their homes.

In valleys and the forest, all that
night,
There had been woe; in every hollow
place,
And under walls, like drifted flowers,
or snow,

Women lay mourning ; for the serpent
lodged
That night within the gates, and had
decreed,
“I will (or ever I come) that ye drive
out
The women, the abhorred of my soul.”

Therefore, more beauteous than all
climbing bloom,
Purple and scarlet, cumbering of the
boughs,
Or flights of azure doves that lit to
drink
The water of the river ; or, new born,
The quivering butterflies in companies,
That slowly crept adown the sandy
marge,
Like living crocus beds, and also drank,
And rose an orange cloud ; their hol-
lowed hands
They dipped between the lilies, or with
robes
Full of ripe fruitage, sat and peeled
and ate,
Weeping ; or comforting their little
ones,
And lulling them with sorrowful long
hymns
Among the palms.

So went the earlier morn.
Then came a messenger, while Japhet
sat
Mournfully, and he said, “The men of
might
Are willing ; let thy master, youth,
appear.”
And Japhet said, “So be it ;” and he
thought,
“Now will I trust in God ;” and he
went in
And stood before his father, and he
said,
“My father ;” but the Master an-
swered not,
But gazed upon the curtains of his tent,
Nor knew that one had called him.
He was clad
As ready for the journey, and his feet
Were sandalled, and his staff was at his
side ;
And Japhet took the gown of sacrifice

And spread it on him, and he laid his
crown
Upon his knees, and he went forth,
and lift
His hand to heaven, and cried, “My
father’s God !”
But neither whisper came nor echo fell
When he did listen. Therefore he
went on :
“Behold, I have a thing to say to thee.
My father charged thy servant, ‘Let
not ruth
Prevail with thee to turn and bear me
hence,
For God appointed me my task, to
preach
Before the mighty.’ I must do my
part
(O, let it not displease thee), for he
said
But yesternight, ‘When they shall send
for me,
Take me before them.’ And I sware
to him.
I pray thee, therefore, count his life
and mine
Precious ; for I that sware, I will per-
form.”

Then cried he to his people, “Let us
hence :
Take up the litter.” And they set
their feet
Toward the raft whereby men crossed
that flood.

And while they journeyed, lo, the
giants sat
Within the fairest hall where all were
fair,
Each on his carven throne, o’er-canop-
ied
With work of women. And the dragon
lay
In a place of honor ; and with subtlety
He counselled them, for they did speak
by turns ;
And they, being proud, might nothing
master them,
But guile alone : and he did fawn on
them ;
And when the younger taunted him,
submit

He testified great humbleness, and
cried,
"A cruel God, forsooth! but nay, O
nay,
I will not think it of Him, that He
meant
To threaten these. O, when I look on
them,
How doth my soul admire."

And one stood forth,
The youngest; of his brethren named
"the Rock."
"Speak out," quoth he, "thou tooth-
less, slavering thing,
What is it? thinkest thou that such as
we
Should be afraid? What is this goodly
doom?"
And Satan laughed upon him "Lo,"
said he,
"Thou art not fully grown, and every
one
I look on standeth higher by the head,
Yea, and the shoulders, than do other
men;
Forsooth, thy servant thought not
thou wouldst fear,
Thou and thy fellows." Then with
one accord,
"Speak," cried they; and with mild,
persuasive eyes,
And flattering tongue, he spoke.

"Ye mighty ones,
It hath been known to you these many
days
How that for piety I am much famed.
I am exceeding pious: if I lie,
As hath been whispered, it is but for
sake
Of God, and that ye should not think
Him hard,
For I am all for God. Now some have
thought
That He hath also (and it may be so
Or yet may not be so) on me been
hard;
Be not ye therefore wroth, for my poor
sake;
I am contented to have earned your
weal,
Though I must therefore suffer.

"Now to-day
One cometh, yea, an harmless man, a
fool,
Who boasts he hath a message from
our God,
And lest that you, for bravery of heart
And stoutness, being angered with his
prate,
Should lift a hand, and kill him, I am
here."

Then spoke the Leader, "How now,
snake? Thy words
Ring false. Why ever liest thou, snake,
to us?
Thou coward! none of us will see thee
harm'd.
I say thou liest. The land is strewed
with slain;
Myself have hewn down companies,
and blood
Makes fertile all the field. Thou
knowest it well;
And hast thou, driveller, panting sore
for age,
Come with a force to bid us spare one
fool?"

And Satan answered, "Nay you! be
not wroth;
Yet true it is, and yet not all the truth.
Your servant would have told the rest,
if now
(For fulness of your life being fretted
sore
At mine infirmities, which God in vain
I supplicate to heal) ye had not caused
My speech to stop." And he they
called "the Oak"
Made answer, "'Tis a good snake; let
him be.
Why would ye fright the poor old
craven beast?
Look how his lolling tongue doth foam
for fear.
Ye should have mercy, brethren, on
the weak.
Speak, dragon, thou hast leave; make
stout thy heart.
What! hast thou lied to this great com-
pany?
It was, we know it was, for humbleness;
Thou wert not willing to offend with
truth."

"Yea, majesties," quoth Satan, "thus
it was,"
And lifted up appealing eyes, and
groaned;
"O, can it be, compassionate as brave,
And housed in cunning works them-
selves have reared,
And served in gold, and warmed with
minivere,
And ruling nobly, that He, not con-
tent
Unless alone He reigneth, looks to
bend
Or break them in, like slaves to cry to
Him,
'What is Thy will with us, O Master
dear?'
Or else to eat of death?"

"For my part, lords,
I cannot think it: for my piety
And reason, which I also share with
you,
Are my best lights, and ever counsel
me,
'Believe not aught against thy God;
believe,
Since thou canst never reach to do Him
wrong,
That He will never stoop to do thee
wrong.
Is He not just and equal, yea, and
kind?'"

Therefore, O majesties, it is my mind,
Concerning him ye wot of, thus to
think
The message is not like what I have
learned,
By reason and experience, of the God.
Therefore no message 'tis. The man
is mad."

Thereat the Leader laughed for scorn.

"Hold, snake;
If God be just, there SHALL be reckon-
ing days.

We rather would He were a partial
God,

And, being strong, He sided with the
strong.

Turn now thy reason to the other
side,

And speak for that; for as to justice,
snake,

We would have none of it."

And Satan fawned:
"My lord is pleased to mock at my
poor wit;
Yet in my pious fashion I must talk:
For say that God was wroth with man,
and came
And slew him, that should make an
empty world,
But not a better nation."

This replied,
"Truth, dragon, yet He is not bound
to mean
A better nation; maybe, He designs,
If none will turn again, a punishment
Upon an evil one."

And Satan cried,
"Alas! my heart being full of love for
men,
I cannot choose but think of God as like
To me; and yet my piety concludes,
Since He will have your fear, that love
alone
Sufficeth not, and I admire, and say,
'Give me, O friends, your love, and
give to God
Your fear'" But they cried out in
wrath and rage,
"We are not strong that any we will
fear,
Nor specially a foe that means us ill."

BOOK VII.

AND while he spoke there was a noise
without;
The curtains of the door were flung
aside,
And some with heavy feet bare in, and
set
A litter on the floor.

The Master lay
Upon it, but his eyes were dimmed and
set;
And Japhet, in despairing weariness,
Leaned it beside. He marked the
mighty ones,
Silent for pride of heart, and in his
place
The jewelled dragon; and the dragon
laughed,
And subtly peered at him, till Japhet
shook

With rage and fear. The snaky wonder cried,
 Hissing, "Thou brown-haired youth, come up to me;
 I fain would have thee for my shrine afar,
 To serve among an host as beautiful
 As thou: draw near." It hissed, and Japhet felt
 Horrible drawings, and cried out in fear,
 "Father! O help, the serpent draweth me!"
 And struggled and grew faint, as in the toils
 A netted bird. But still his father lay
 Unconscious, and the mighty did not speak,
 But half in fear and half for wonderment
 Beheld. And yet again the dragon laughed,
 And leered at him and hissed; and Japhet strove
 Vainly to take away his spell-set eyes,
 And moved to go to him, till piercingly
 Crying out, "God! forbid it, God in heaven!"
 The dragon lowered his head, and shut his eyes
 As feigning sleep; and, suddenly released,
 He fell back staggering; and at noise of it,
 And clash of Japhet's weapons on the floor,
 And Japhet's voice crying out, "I loathe thee, snake!
 I hate thee! O, I hate thee!" came again
 The senses of the shipwright; and he, moved,
 And looking, as one'mazed, distressfully
 Upon the mighty, said, "One called on God:
 Where is my God? If God have need of me,
 Let Him come down and touch my lips with strength,
 Or dying I shall die."

It came to pass,
 While he was speaking, that the curtains swayed;
 A rushing wind did move throughout the place,
 And all the pillars shook, and on the head
 Of Noah the hair was lifted, and there played
 A somewhat as it were a light, upon His breast; then fell a darkness, and men heard
 A whisper as of one that spake. With that,
 The daunted mighty ones kept silent watch
 Until the wind had ceased and darkness fled.
 When it grew light, there curled a cloud of smoke
 From many censers where the dragon lay.
 It hid him. He had called his ministrants,
 And bid them veil him thus, that none might look;
 Also the folk who came with Noah had fled.

But Noah was seen, for he stood up erect,
 And leaned on Japhet's hand. Then, after pause,
 The Leader said, "My brethren, it were well
 (For naught we fear) to let this sorcerer speak."
 And they did reach toward the man their staves,
 And cry with loud accord, "Hail, sorcerer, hail!"

And he made answer, "Hail! I am a man
 That is a shipwright. I was born afar
 To Lamech, him that reigns a king, to wit,
 Over the land of Jalal. Majesties, I bring a message, — lay you it to heart;
 For there is wrath in heaven: my God is wroth.
 'Prepare your houses, or I come,' saith He,

'A Judge,' Now, therefore, say not in
 your hearts,
 'What have we done?' Your dogs
 may answer that,
 To make whom fiercer for the chase ye
 feed
 With captives whom ye slew not in the
 war,
 But saved alive, and living throw to
 them
 Daily. Your wives may answer that,
 whose babes
 Their firstborn ye do take and offer up
 To this abhorred snake, while yet the
 milk
 Is in their innocent mouths, — your
 maiden babes
 Tender. Your slaves may answer that,
 — the gangs
 Whose eyes ye did put out to make
 them work
 By night unwitting (yea, by multitudes
 They work upon the wheel in chains).
 Your friends
 May answer that, — (their bleached
 bones cry out), —
 For ye did, wickedly, to eat their lands,
 Turn on their valleys, in a time of
 peace,
 The rivers, and they, choking in the
 night,
 Died unavenged. But rather (for I
 leave
 To tell of more, the time would be so
 long
 To do it, and your time, O mighty ones,
 Is short), — but rather say, 'We sin-
 ners know
 Why the Judge standeth at the door,'
 and turn
 While yet there may be respite, and
 repent.

"Or else," saith He that formed you,
 'I swear,
 By all the silence of the time to come,
 By the solemnities of death, — yea,
 more,
 By Mine own power and love which ye
 have scorned, —
 That I will come. I will command the
 clouds,
 And raining they shall rain; yea, I will
 stir

With all my storms the ocean for your
 sake,
 And break for you the boundary of the
 deep.

"Then shall the mighty mourn.

"Should I forbear,
 That have been patient? I will not
 forbear!
 For yet,' saith He, 'the weak cry out;
 for yet
 The little ones do languish; and the
 slave
 Lifts up to Me his chain. I, there-
 fore, I
 Will hear them. I by death will scat-
 ter you;
 Yea, and by death will draw them to
 My breast,
 And gather them to peace.

"But yet,' saith He,
 'Repent, and turn you. Wherefore
 will ye die?'

"Turn then, O turn, while yet the
 enemy
 Untamed of man fatefully moans afar;
 For if ye will not turn, the doom is
 near.
 Then shall the crested wave make
 sport, and beat
 You mighty at your doors. Will ye be
 wroth?
 Will ye forbid it? Monsters of the
 deep
 Shall suckle in your palaces their young,
 And swim atween your hangings, all of
 them
 Costly with brodered work, and rare
 with gold
 And white and scarlet (there did ye op-
 press, —
 There did ye make you vile); but ye
 shall lie
 Meekly, and storm and wind shall rage
 above,
 And urge the weltering wave.

"Yet,' saith thy God,
 'Son,' ay, to each of you He saith, 'O
 son,

Made in My image, beautiful and strong,
 Why wilt thou die? Thy Father loves thee well.
 Repent and turn thee from thine evil ways,
 O son! and no more dare the wrath of love.
 Live for thy Father's sake that formed thee.
 Why wilt thou die?' Here will I make an end."

Now ever on his daïs the dragon lay,
 Feigning to sleep; and all the mighty ones
 Were wroth, and chided, some against the woe,
 And some at whom the sorcerer they had named, —
 Some at their fellows, for the younger sort —
 As men the less acquaint with deeds of blood,
 And given to learning and the arts of peace
 (Their fathers having crushed rebellion out
 Before their time) — lent favorable ears.
 They said, "A man, or false or fanatic,
 May claim good audience if he fill our ears
 With what is strange: and we would hear again."

The Leader said, "An audience hath been given.
 The man hath spoken, and his words are naught;
 A feeble threatener, with a foolish threat,
 And it is not our manner that we sit
 Beyond the noonday;" then they grandly rose,
 A stalwart crowd, and with their Leader moved
 To the tones of harping, and the beat of shawms,
 And the noise of pipes, away. But some were left
 About the Master; and the feigning snake
 Couched on his daïs.

Then one to Japhet said, —
 One called "the Cedar Tree," —
 "Dost thou, too, think
 To reign upon our lands when we lie drowned?"
 And Japhet said, "I think not, nor desire,
 Nor in my heart consent, but that ye swear [cried,
 Allegiance to the God, and live." He
 To one surnamed "the Pine," —
 "Brother, behooves
 That deep we cut our names in yonder crag,
 Else when this youth returns, his sons may ask
 Our names, and he may answer, 'Matters not,
 For my part I forget them.'"

Japhet said,
 "They might do worse than that, they might deny
 That such as you have ever been."
 With that
 They answered, "No, thou dost not think it, no!"
 And Japhet, being chafed, replied in heat,
 "And wherefore? if ye say of what is sworn, [hard
 'He will not do it,' shall it be more
 For future men, if any talk on it,
 To say, 'He did not do it?'" They replied,
 With laughter, "Lo you! he is stout with us.
 And yet he cowered before the poor old snake.
 Sirrah, when you are saved, we pray you now
 To bear our might in mind, — do, sirrah, do;
 And likewise tell your sons, "'The Cedar Tree,"
 Was a good giant, for he struck me not,
 Though he was young and full of sport, and though
 I taunted him.'"

With that they also passed.
 But there remained who with the shipwright spoke:

"How wilt thou certify to us thy truth?"

And he related to them all his ways
From the beginning: of the Voice that
called;

Moreover, how the ship of doom was
built.

And one made answer, "Shall the
mighty God

Talk with a man of wooden beams and
bars?

No, thou mad preacher, no. If He,
Eterne,

Be ordering of His far infinitudes,
And darkness cloud a world, it is but
chance,

As if the shadow of His hand had
fallen

On one that He forgot, and troubled
it."

Then said the Master, "Yet,—who
told thee so?"

And from his daïs the feigning serpent
hissed:

"Preacher, the light within, it was
that shined,

And told him so. The pious will have
dread

Him to declare such as ye rashly told.
The course of God is one. It likes not
us

To think of Him as being acquaint
with change:

It were beneath Him. Nay, the
finished earth

Is left to her great masters. They
must rule;

They do; and I have set myself be-
tween,—

A visible thing for worship, sith His
face

(For He is hard) He showeth not to
men.

Yea, I have set myself 'twixt God and
man,

To be interpreter, and teach mankind
A pious lesson by my piety.

He loveth not, nor hateth, nor desires,—
It were beneath Him."

And the Master said,
"Thou liest. Thou wouldst lie away
the world,

If He whom thou hast dared to speak
against

Would suffer it." "I may not chide
with thee,"

It answered, "Now; but if there come
such time

As thou hast prophesied, as I now
reign

In all men's sight, shall my dominion
then

Reach to be mighty in their souls.
Thou too

Shalt feel it, prophet." And he
lowered his head.

Then quoth the Leader of the young
men: "Sir,

We scorn you not; speak further; yet
our thought

First answer. Not but by a miracle
Can this thing be. The fashion of the
world

We heretofore have never known to
change;

And will God change it now?"

He then replied:
"What is thy thought? THERE IS NO
MIRACLE?

There is a great one, which thou hast
not read,

And never shalt escape. Thyself, O
man,

Thou art the miracle. Lo, if thou
sayest,

'I am one, and fashioned like the
gracious world,

Red clay is all my make, myself, my
whole,

And not my habitation,' then thy sleep
Shall give thee wings to play among the
rays

O' the morning. If thy thought be, 'I
am one,—

A spirit among spirits,—and the world
A dream my spirit dreameth of, my
dream

Being all,' the dominating mountains
strong

Shall not for that forbear to take thy
 breath,
 And rage with all their winds, and beat
 thee back,
 And beat thee down when thou wouldst
 set thy feet
 Upon their awful crests. Ay, thou
 thyself,
 Being in the world and of the world,
 thyself,
 Hast breathed in breath from Him
 that made the world.
 Thou dost inherit, as thy Maker's son,
 That which He is, and that which He
 hath made:
 Thou art thy Father's copy of Him-
 self, —
 THOU art thy FATHER'S MIRACLE.

“Behold,
 He buildeth up the stars in companies;
 He made for them a law. To man He
 said,
 ‘Freely I give thee freedom.’ What
 remains?
 O, it remains, if thou, the image of
 God,
 Wilt reason well, that thou shalt know
 His ways;
 But first thou must be loyal, — love, O
 man,
 Thy Father, — hearken when He
 pleads with thee,
 For there is something left of Him
 e'en now, —
 A witness for thy Father in thy soul,
 Albeit thy better state thou hast fore-
 gone.

“Now, then, be still, and think not in
 thy soul,
 ‘The rivers in their course forever run,
 And turn not from it. He is like to
 them
 Who made them.’ Think the rather,
 ‘With my foot
 I have turned the rivers from their
 ancient way
 To water grasses that were fading.
 What!
 Is God my Father as the river wave,
 That yet descendeth, — like the lesser
 thing

He made, and not like me, a living son,
 That changed the watercourse to suit
 his will?’

“Man is the miracle in nature. God
 Is the ONE MIRACLE to man. Be-
 hold,
 ‘There is a God,’ thou sayest. Thou
 sayest well:
 In that thou sayest all. To Be is more
 Of wonderful than, being, to have
 wrought,
 Or reigned, or rested.

“Hold then there, content;
 Learn that to love is the one way to
 know
 Or God or man: it is not love received
 That maketh man to know the inner
 life
 Of them that love him; his own love
 bestowed
 Shall do it. Love thy Father, and no
 more
 His doings shall be strange. Thou
 shalt not fret
 At any counsel, then, that He will
 send, —
 No, nor rebel, albeit He have with thee
 Great reservations. Know, to Be is
 more
 Than to have acted; yea, or, after rest
 And patience, to have risen and been
 wroth,
 Broken the sequence of an ordered
 earth,
 And troubled nations.”

Then the dragon sighed.
 “Poor fanatic,” quoth he, “thou
 speakest well.
 Would I were like thee, for thy faith is
 strong,
 Albeit thy senses wander. Yea, good
 sooth,
 My masters, let us not despise, but
 learn
 Fresh loyalty from this poor loyal soul.
 Let us go forth — (myself will also go
 To head you) — and do sacrifice; for
 that,
 We know, is pleasing to the mighty
 God:

But as for building many arks of wood,
O majesties! when He shall counsel
you
HIMSELF, then build. What say you,
shall it be
An hundred oxen, — fat, well liking,
white?
An hundred? why, a thousand were
not much
To such as you." Then Noah lift up
his arms
To heaven, and cried, "Thou aged
shape of sin,
The Lord rebuke thee."

BOOK VIII.

THEN one ran, crying, while Niloiya
wrought,
"The Master cometh!" and she went
within
To adorn herself for meeting him.
And Shem
Went forth and talked with Japhet in
the field,
And said, "Is it well, my brother?"
He replied,
"Well! and, I pray you, is it well at
home?"

But Shem made answer, "Can a
house be well,
If he that should command it bides
afar?
Yet well is thee, because a fair free
maid
Is found to wed thee; and they bring
her in
This day at sundown. Therefore is
much haste
To cover thick with costly webs the
floor,
And pluck and cover thick the same
with leaves
Of all sweet herbs, — I warrant, ye
shall hear
No footfall where she treadeth; and
the seats
Are ready, spread with robes; the
tables set
With golden baskets, red pomegran-
ates shred

To fill them; and the rubied censers
smoke,
Heaped up with ambergris and cinna-
mon,
And frankincense and cedar."

Japhet said,
"I will betroth her to me straight;"
and went
(Yet labored he with sore disquietude)
To gather grapes, and reap and bind
the sheaf
For his betrothal. And his brother
spake,
"Where is our father? doth he preach
to-day?"
And Japhet answered, "Yea. He
said to me,
'Go forward; I will follow when the
folk
By yonder mountain-hold I shall have
warned.'"

And Shem replied, "How thinkest
thou? — thine ears
Have heard him oft." He answered,
"I do think
These be the last days of this old fair
world."

Then he did tell him of the giant folk:
How they, than he, were taller by the
head;
How one must stride that will ascend
the steps
That lead to their wide halls; and how
they drave,
With manful shouts, the mammoth to
the north;
And how the talking dragon lied and
fawned,
They seated proudly on their ivory
thrones,
And scorning him: and of their peaked
hoods,
And garments wrought upon, each with
the tale
Of him that wore it, — all his manful
deeds
(Yea, and about their skirts were effigies
Of kings that they had slain; and some,
whose swords
Many had pierced, wore vestures all of
red,

To signify much blood): and of their
 pride
 He told, but of the vision in the tent
 He told him not.

And when they reached the house,
 Niloiya met them, and to Japhet cried,
 "All hail, right fortunate! Lo, I have
 found

A maid. And now thou hast done
 well to reap

The late ripe corn." So he went in
 with her,

And she did talk with him right moth-
 erly:

"It hath been fully told me how ye
 loathed

To wed thy father's slave; yea, she
 herself,

Did she not all declare to me?"

He said,
 "Yet is thy damsel fair, and wise of
 heart."

"Yea," quoth his mother; "she made
 clear to me

How ye did weep, my son, and ye did
 vow,

'I will not take her!' Now, it was
 not I

That wrought to have it so." And he
 replied,

"I know it." Quoth the mother, "It
 is well;

For that same cause is laughter in my
 heart."

"But she is sweet of language," Ja-
 phet said.

"Ay," quoth Niloiya, "and thy wife
 no less

Whom thou shalt wed anon,—forsooth,
 anon,—

It is a lucky hour. Thou wilt?" He
 said,

"I will." And Japhet laid the slender
 sheaf

From off his shoulder, and he said,
 "Behold,

My father!" Then Niloiya turned
 herself,

And lo! the shipwright stood. "All
 hail!" quoth she,

And bowed herself, and kissed him on
 the mouth;

But while she spake with him, sorely
 he sighed;

And she did hang about his neck the
 robe

Of feasting, and she poured upon his
 hands

Clear water, and anointed him, and set
 Before him bread.

And Japhet said to him,
 "My father, my beloved, wilt thou yet
 Be sad because of scorning? Eat, this
 day;

For as an angel in their eyes thou art
 Who stand before thee." But he an-
 swered, "Peace!

Thy words are wide."

And when Niloiya heard,
 She said, "Is this a time for mirth of
 heart

And wine? Behold, I thought to wed
 my son,

Even this Japhet; but is this a time,
 When sad is he to whom is my desire,
 And lying under sorrow as from God?"

He answered, "Yea, it is a time of
 times;

Bring in the maid." Niloiya said,
 "The maid

That first I spoke on, shall not Japhet
 wed;

It likes not her, nor yet it likes not me.
 But I have found another; yea, good
 sooth,

The damsel will not tarry, she will come
 With all her slaves by sundown."

And she said,
 "Comfort thy heart, and eat: more-
 over, know

How that thy great work even to-day is
 done.

Sir, thy great ship is finished, and the
 folk

(For I, according to thy will, have paid
 All that was left us to them for their
 wage)

Have brought, as to a storehouse, flour
 of wheat,

Honey and oil,—much victual; yea,
 and fruits,

Curtains and household gear. And,
 sir, they say
 It is thy will to take it for thy hold,
 Our fastness and abode." He an-
 swered, "Yea,
 Else wherefore was it built?" She
 said, "Good sir,
 I pray you make us not the whole
 earth's scorn.
 And now, to-morrow in thy father's
 house
 Is a great feast, and weddings are to-
 ward;
 Let be the ship, till after, for thy words
 Have ever been, 'If God shall send a
 flood,
 There will I dwell;' I pray you there-
 fore wait
 At least till He *DOETH* send it."

And he turned,
 And answered nothing. Now the sun
 was low
 While yet she spake; and Japhet came
 to them
 In goodly raiment, and upon his arm
 The garment of betrothal. And with
 that
 A noise, and then brake in a woman-
 slave
 And Amarant. This, with folding of
 her hands,
 Did say full meekly, "If I do offend,
 Yet have not I been willing to offend;
 For now this woman will not be denied
 Herself to tell her errand."

And they sat.
 Then spoke the woman, "If I do
 offend,
 Pray you forgive the bond-slave, for her
 tongue
 Is for her mistress. 'Lo,' my mistress
 saith,
 'Put off thy bravery, bridegroom; fold
 away,
 Mother, thy webs of pride, thy costly
 robes
 Woven of many colors. We have
 heard
 Thy master. Lo, to-day right evil
 things
 He prophesied to us that were his
 friends;

Therefore, my answer: — God do so to
 me;
 Yea, God do so to me, more also, more
 Than he did threaten, if my damsel's
 foot
 Ever draw nigh thy door.'"

And when she heard,
 Niloiya sat amazed, in grief of soul.
 But Japhet came unto the slave, where
 low
 She bowed herself for fear. He said,
 "Depart;
 Say to thy mistress, 'It is well'"
 With that
 She turned herself, and she made haste
 to flee,
 Lest any, for those evil words she
 brought,
 Would smite her. But the bondmaid
 of the house
 Lift up her hand and said, "If I
 offend,
 It was not of my heart: thy damsel
 knew
 Naught of this matter." And he held
 to her
 His hand and touched her, and said,
 "Amarant!"
 And when she looked upon him, she
 did take
 And spread before her face her radiant
 locks,
 Trembling. And Japhet said, "Lift
 up thy face,
 O fairest of the daughters, thy fair
 face;
 For, lo! the bridegroom standeth with
 the robe
 Of thy betrothal!" — and he took her
 locks
 In his two hands to part them from
 her brow,
 And laid them on her shoulders; and
 he said,
 "Sweet are the blushes of thy face,"
 and put
 The robe upon her, having said, "Be-
 hold,
 I have repented me; and oft by night,
 In the waste wilderness, while all
 things slept,
 I thought upon thy words, for they
 were sweet.

"For this I make thee free. And now
 thyself
 Art loveliest in mine eyes; I look, and
 lo!
 Thou art of beauty more than any
 thought
 I had concerning thee. Let, then, this
 robe,
 Wrought on with imagery of fruitful
 bough,
 And graceful leaf, and birds with ten-
 der eyes,
 Cover the ripples of thy tawny hair."
 So, when she held her peace, he
 brought her nigh
 To hear the speech of wedlock; ay, he
 took
 The golden cup of wine to drink with
 her,
 And laid the sheaf upon her arms. He
 said,
 "Like as my fathers in the older days
 Led home the daughters whom they
 chose, do I;
 Like as they said, 'Mine honor have I
 set
 Upon thy head!' do I. Eat of my
 bread,
 Rule in my house, be mistress of my
 slaves,
 And mother of my children."

And he brought
 The damsel to his father, saying, "Be-
 hold
 My wife! I have betrothed her to my-
 self;
 I pray you, kiss her." And the Mas-
 ter did:
 He said, "Be mother of a multitude,
 And let them to thy father even so
 Be found as he is found to me."

With that
 She answered, "Let this woman, sir,
 find grace
 And favor in your sight."

And Japhet said,
 "Sweet mother, I have wed the maid
 ye chose
 And brought me first. I leave her in
 thy hand;

Have care on her, till I shall come
 again
 And ask her of thee." So they went
 apart,
 He and his father, to the marriage
 feast.

BOOK IX.

THE prayer of Noah. The man went
 forth by night
 And listened; and the earth was dark
 and still,
 And he was driven of his great distress
 Into the forest; but the birds of night
 Sang sweetly; and he fell upon his
 face,
 And cried, "God, God! Thy billows
 and Thy waves
 Have swallowed up my soul.

"Where is my God?
 For I have somewhat yet to plead with
 Thee;
 For I have walked the strands of Thy
 great deep,
 Heard the dull thunder of its rage afar,
 And its dread moaning. O, the field
 is sweet,—
 Spare it. The delicate woods make
 white their trees
 With blossom,—spare them. Life is
 sweet; behold
 There is much cattle, and the wild and
 tame,
 Father, do feed in quiet,—spare them.

"God!
 Where is my God? The long wave
 doth not rear
 Her ghostly crest to lick the forest up,
 And like a chief in battle fall,—not
 yet.
 The lightnings pour not down, from
 ragged holes
 In heaven, the torment of their forkèd
 tongues,
 And, like fell serpents, dart and sting,
 —not yet.
 The winds awake not, with their awful
 wings
 To winnow, even as chaff, from out
 their track,

All that withstandeth, and bring down
the pride
Of all things strong and all things
high, —

“Not yet.
O, let it not be yet. Where is my
God?
How am I saved, if I and mine be
saved
Alone? I am not saved, for I have
loved
My country and my kin. Must I, Thy
thrall,
Over their lands be lord when they are
gone?
I would not: spare them, Mighty.
Spare Thyself,
For Thou dost love them greatly, —
and if not . . .”

Another praying unremote, a Voice
Calm as the solitude between wide
stars.

“Where is my God, who loveth this
lost world, —
Lost from its place and name, but won
for Thee?
Where is my multitude, my multi-
tude,
That I shall gather?” And white
smoke went up
From incense that was burning, but
there gleamed
No light of fire, save dimly to re-
veal
The whiteness rising, as the prayer of
him
That mourned. “My God, appear for
me, appear;
Give me my multitude, for it is mine.
The bitterness of death I have not
feared,
To-morrow shall Thy courts, O God,
be full.
Then shall the captive from his bonds
go free,
Then shall the thrall find rest, that
knew not rest
From labor and from blows. The sor-
rowful —
That said of joy, ‘What is it?’ and of
songs,

‘We have not heard them’ — shall be
glad and sing;
Then shall the little ones that knew not
Thee,
And such as heard not of Thee, see
Thy face,
And, seeing, dwell content.”

The prayer of Noah.
He cried out in the darkness, “Hear,
O God,
Hear HIM: hear this one; through
the gates of death,
If life be all past praying for, O give
To Thy great multitude a way to
peace;
Give them to HIM.

“But yet,” said he, “O yet,
If there be respite for the terrible,
The proud, yea, such as scorn Thee, —
and if not . . .
Let not mine eyes behold their fall.”

He cried,
“Forgive. I have not done Thy work,
Great Judge,
With a perfect heart; I have but half
believed,
While in accustomed language I have
warned;
And now there is no more to do, no
place
For my repentance, yea, no hour re-
mains
For doing of that work again. O
lost,
Lost world!” And while he prayed,
the daylight dawned.

And Noah went up into the ship, and
sat
Before the Lord. And all was still;
and now
In that great quietness the sun came
up,
And there were marks across it, as it
were
The shadow of a Hand upon the
sun, —
Three fingers dark and dead, and
afterward

There rose a white thick mist, that
peacefully
Folded the fair earth in her funeral
shroud, —
The earth that gave no token, save that
now
There fell a little trembling under foot.

And Noah went down, and took and
hid his face
Behind his mantle, saying, "I have
made
Great preparation, and it may be
yet,
Beside my house, whom I did charge
to come
This day to meet me, there may enter
in
Many that yesternight thought scorn of
all
My bidding." And because the fog
was thick,
He said, "Forbid it, Heaven, if such
there be,
That they should miss the way." And
even then
There was a noise of weeping and lament;

The words of them that were affrighted,
yea,
And cried for grief of heart. There
came to him
The mother and her children, and they
cried,
"Speak, father, what is this? What
hast thou done?"
And when he lifted up his face, he
saw
Japhet, his well-belovèd, where he
stood
Apart; and Amarant leaned upon his
breast,
And hid her face, for she was sore
afraid;
And lo! the robes of her betrothal
gleamed
White in the deadly gloom.

And at his feet
The wives of his two other sons did
kneel,
And wring their hands.

One cried, "O, speak to us;
We are affrighted; we have dreamed a
dream,
Each to herself. For me, I saw in
mine
The grave old angels, like to shepherds,
walk,
Much cattle following them. Thy
daughter looked,
And they did enter here."

The other lay
And moaned, "Alas! O father, for my
dream
Was evil: lo, I heard when it was dark,
I heard two wicked ones contend for
me.
One said, 'And wherefore should this
woman live,
When only for her children, and for
her,
Is woe and degradation?' Then he
laughed,
The other crying, 'Let alone, O
Prince;
Hinder her not to live and bear much
seed,
Because I hate her.'"

But he said, "Rise up,
Daughters of Noah, for I have learned
no words
To comfort you." Then spake her
lord to her,
"Peace! or I swear that for thy dream
myself
Will hate thee also."

And Niloiya said,
"My sons, if one of you will hear my
words,
Go now, look out, and tell me of the
day,
How fares it?"

And the fateful darkness grew.
But Shera went up to do his mother's
will;
And all was one as though the frightened
earth
Quivered and fell a-trembling; then
they hid

Their faces every one, till he returned,
 And spake not. "Nay," they cried,
 "what hast thou seen?"
 O, is it come to this?" He answered
 them,
 "The door is shut."

CONTRASTED SONGS.

SAILING BEYOND SEAS.

(*Old Style.*)

METHOUGHT the stars were blinking
 bright,
 And the old brig's sails unfurled;
 I said, "I will sail to my love this
 night
 At the other side of the world."
 I stepped aboard, — we sailed so fast, —
 The sun shot up from the bourn;
 But a dove that perched upon the mast
 Did mourn, and mourn, and mourn.
 O fair dove! O fond dove!
 And dove with the white breast,
 Let me alone, the dream is my own,
 And my heart is full of rest.

My true love fares on this great hill,
 Feeding his sheep for aye;
 I looked in his hut, but all was still,
 My love was gone away.
 I went to gaze in the forest creek,
 And the dove mourned on apace;
 No flame did flash, nor fair blue reek
 Rose up to show me his place.
 O last love! O first love!
 My love with the true heart,
 To think I have come to this your
 home,
 And yet — we are apart!

My love! He stood at my right hand,
 His eyes were grave and sweet.
 Methought he said, "In this far land,
 O, is it thus we meet?"
 Ah, maid most dear, I am not here;
 I have no place, — no part, —

No dwelling more by sea or shore,
 But only in thy heart."
 O fair dove! O fond dove!
 Till night rose over the bourn,
 The dove on the mast, as we sailed
 fast,
 Did mourn, and mourn, and
 mourn.

REMONSTRANCE.

DAUGHTERS of Eve! your mother did
 not well:
 She laid the apple in your father's
 hand,
 And we have read, O wonder! what
 befell, —
 The man was not deceived, nor yet
 could stand;
 He chose to lose, for love of her, his
 throne, —
 With her could die, but could not live
 alone.

Daughters of Eve! he did not fall so
 low,
 Nor fall so far, as that sweet woman
 fell;
 For something better, than as gods to
 know,
 That husband in that home left off
 to dwell:
 For this, till love be reckoned less than
 lore,
 Shall man be first and best for ever-
 more.

Daughters of Eve! it was for your dear
 sake
 The world's first hero died an un-
 crowned king;
 But God's great pity touched the grand
 mistake,
 And made his married love a sacred
 thing:
 For yet his nobler sons, if aught be
 true,
 Find the lost Eden in their love to
 you.

SONG FOR THE NIGHT OF
CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

(*A Humble Imitation.*)

—
“And birds of calm sit brooding on
the charmed wave.”

—
It is the noon of night,
And the world's Great Light
Gone out, she widow-like doth carry
her:

The moon hath veiled her face,
Nor looks on that dread place
Where He lieth dead in sealed sepul-
chre;

And heaven and hades, emptied,
lend

Their flocking multitudes to watch and
wait the end.

Tier above tier they rise,
Their wings new line the skies,
And shed out comforting light among
the stars;

But they of the other place
The heavenly signs deface,
The gloomy brand of hell their bright-
ness mars;

Yet high they sit in thronèd state, —
It is the hour of darkness to them dedi-
cate.

And first and highest set,
Where the black shades are met,
The lord of night and hades leans
him down;

His gleaming eyeballs show
More awful than the glow
Which hangeth by the points of his
dread crown;

And at his feet, where lightnings
play,

The fatal sisters sit and weep, and
curse their day.

Lo! one, with eyes all wide,
As she were sight denied,
Sits blindly feeling at her distaff old;
One, as distraught with woe,
Letting the spindle go,

Her starry-sprinkled gown doth shiv-
ering fold;
And one right mournful hangs her
head,
Complaining, “Woe is me! I may not
cut the thread.

“All men of every birth,
Yea, great ones of the earth,
Kings and their councillors, have I
drawn down;
But I am held of Thee, —
Why dost Thou trouble me,
To bring me up, dead King, that
keep'st Thy crown?
Yet for all courtiers hast but ten
Lowly, unlettered, Galilean fishermen.

“Olympian heights are bare
Of whom men worshipped there,
Immortal feet their snows may print
no more;
Their stately powers below
Lie desolate, nor know
This thirty years Thessalian grove or
shore;
But I am elder far than they; —
Where is the sentence writ that I must
pass away?

“Art thou come up for this,
Dark regent, awful Dis?
And hast thou moved the deep to
mark our ending?
And stirred the dens beneath
To see us eat of death,
With all the scoffing heavens toward
us bending?
Help! powers of ill, see not us
die!”
But neither demon dares, nor angel
deigns, reply.

Her sisters, fallen on sleep,
Fade in the upper deep,
And their grim lord sits on, in doleful
trance;
Till her black veil she rends,
And with her death-shriek bends
Downward the terrors of her counte-
nance;

Then, whelmed in night and no
more seen,
They leave the world a doubt if ever
such have been.

And the winged armies twain
Their awful watch maintain;
They mark the earth at rest with her
Great Dead.
Behold, from Antres wide,
Green Atlas heave his side;
His moving woods their scarlet clus-
ters shed,
The swathing coif his front that
cools,
And tawny lions lapping at his palm-
edged pools.

Then like a heap of snow,
Lying where grasses grow,
See glimmering, while the moony
lustres creep,
Mild-mannered Athens, dight
In dewy marbles white,
Among her goddesses and gods
asleep;
And, swaying on a purple sea,
The many moored galleys clustering at
her quay.

Also, 'neath palm-trees' shade,
Amid their camels laid,
The pastoral tribes with all their
flocks at rest;
Like to those old-world folk
With whom two angels broke
The bread of men at Abram's cour-
teous 'quest,
When, listening as they prophe-
sied,
His desert princess, being reprovèd,
her laugh denied.

Or from the Morians' land
See worshipped Nilus bland,
Taking the silver road he gave the
world,
To wet his ancient shrine
With waters held divine,
And touch his temple steps with
wavelets curled,

And list, ere darkness change to
gray,
Old minstrel-throated Memnon chant-
ing in the day.

Moreover, Indian glades,
Where kneel the sun-swart maids,
On Gunga's flood their votive flow-
ers to throw,
And launch i' the sultry night
Their burning cressets bright,
Most like a fleet of stars that south-
ing go,
Till on her bosom prosperously
She floats them shining forth to sail the
lullèd sea.

Nor bend they not their eyn
Where the watch-fires shine,
By shepherds fed, on hills of Beth-
lehem:
They mark, in goodly wise,
The city of David rise,
The gates and towers of rare Jeru-
salem;
And hear the 'scapèd Kedron fret,
And night dews dropping from the
leaves of Olivet.

But now the setting moon
To curtainèd lands must soon,
In her obedient fashion, minister;
She first, as loath to go,
Lets her last silver flow
Upon her Master's sealèd sepulchre;
And trees that in the garden
spread,
She kisseth all for sake of His low-
lying head,

Then 'neath the rim goes down;
And night with darker frown
Sinks on the fateful garden watchèd
long;
When some despairing eyes,
Far in the murky skies,
The unwishèd waking by their gloom
foretell;
And blackness up the welkin
swings,
And drinks the mild effulgence from
celestial wings.

Last, with amazed cry,
The hosts asunder fly,
Leaving an empty gulf of blackest
hue ;
Whence straightway shooteth
down,
By the Great Father thrown,
A mighty angel, strong and dread to
view ;
And at his fall the rocks are rent,
The waiting world doth quake with
mortal trembling ;

The regions far and near
Quail with a pause of fear,
More terrible than aught since time
began ;
The winds, that dare not fleet,
Drop at his awful feet,
And in its bed wails the wide ocean ;
The flower of dawn forbears to
blow,
And the oldest running river cannot
skill to flow.

At stand, by that dread place,
He lifts his radiant face,
And looks to heaven with reverent
love and fear ;
Then, while the welkin quakes,
And muttering thunder breaks,
And lightnings shoot and ominous
meteors drear,
And all the daunted earth doth
moan,
He from the doors of death rolls back
the sealèd stone. —

— In regal quiet deep,
Lo, One new waked from sleep !
Behold, He standeth in the rock-
hewn door !
Thy children shall not die, —
Peace, peace, thy Lord is by !
He liveth ! — they shall live for ever-
more.
Peace ! lo, He lifts a priestly hand,
And blesseth all the sons of men in
every land.

Then, with great dread and wail,
Fall down, like storms of hail,
The legions of the lost in fearful
wise ;

And they whose blissful race
Peoples the better place
Lift up their wings to cover their fair
eyes,
And through the waxing saffron
brede,
Till they are lost in light, recede, and
yet recede.

So while the fields are dim,
And the red sun his rim
First heaves, in token of his reign
benign,
All stars the most admired,
Into their blue retired,
Lie hid, — the faded moon forgets to
shine, —
And, hurrying down the sphery
way,
Night flies and sweeps her shadow from
the paths of day.

But look ! the Saviour blest,
Calm after solemn rest,
Stands in the garden 'neath His olive-
boughs ;
The earliest smile of day
Doth on His vesture play,
And light the majesty of His still
brows ;
While angels hang with wings out-
spread,
Holding the new-won crown above His
saintly head.

SONG OF MARGARET.

Av, I saw her, we have met, —
Married eyes, how sweet they be, —
Are you happier, Margaret,
Than you might have been with me ?
Silence ! make no more ado !
Did she think I should forget ?
Matters nothing, though I knew,
Margaret, Margaret.

Once those eyes, full sweet, full shy,
Told a certain thing to mine ;
What they told me I put by,
O, so careless of the sign.

Such an easy thing to take,
And I did not want it then ;
Fool ! I wish my heart would break,
Scorn is hard on hearts of men.

Scorn of self is bitter work, —
Each of us has felt it now :
Bluest skies she counted mirk,
Self-betrayed of eyes and brow ;
As for me, I went my way,
And a better man drew nigh,
Fain to earn, with long essay,
What the winner's hand threw by.

Matters not in deserts old,
What was born, and waxed, and
yearned,
Year to year its meaning told,
I am come, — its deeps are learned, —
Come, but there is naught to say, —
Married eyes with mine have met.
Silence ! O, I had my day,
Margaret, Margaret.

SONG OF THE GOING AWAY.

" OLD man, upon the green hillside,
With yellow flowers besprinkled o'er,
How long in silence wilt thou bide
At this low stone door ?

" I stoop : within 'tis dark and still ;
But shadowy paths methinks there
be,
And lead thee far into the hill ?"
" Traveller, come and see."

" 'Tis dark, 'tis cold, and hung with
gloom ;
I care not now within to stay ;
For thee and me is scarcely room,
I will hence away."

" Not so, not so, thou youthful guest,
Thy foot shall issue forth no more :
Behold the chamber of thy rest,
And the closing door !"

" O, have I 'scaped the whistling ball,
And striven on smoky fields of fight,
And scaled the 'leaguered city's wall
In the dangerous night ;

" And borne my life unharmèd still
Through foaming gulfs of yeasty
spray,
To yield it on a grassy hill
At the noon of day ?"

" Peace ! Say thy prayers, and go to
sleep,
Till *some time*, ONE my seal shall
break,
And deep shall answer unto deep,
When He crieth, 'AWAKE !'"

A LILY AND A LUTE.

(*Song of the uncommunicated Ideal.*)

I.

I OPENED the eyes of my soul.

And behold,
A white river-lily : a lily awake, and
aware, —
For she set her face upward, — aware
how in scarlet and gold
A long wrinkled cloud, left behind of
the wandering air,
Lay over with fold upon fold,
With fold upon fold.

And the blushing sweet shame of the
cloud made her also ashamed,
The white river-lily, that suddenly
knew she was fair ;
And over the far-away mountains that
no man hath named,
And that no foot hath trod,
Flung down out of heavenly places,
there fell, as it were,
A rose-bloom, a token of love, that
should make them endure,
Withdrawn in snow silence forever, who
keep themselves pure,
And look up to God.

Then I said, "In rosy air,
Cradled on thy reaches fair,
While the blushing early ray
Whitens into perfect day,
River-lily, sweetest known,
Art thou set for me alone?
Nay, but I will bear thee far,
Where yon clustering steeples are,
And the bells ring out o'erhead,
And the stated prayers are said;
And the busy farmer's pace,
Trading in the market-place;
And the country lasses sit
By their butter, praising it;
And the latest news is told,
While the fruit and cream are sold;
And the friendly gossips greet,
Up and down the sunny street.
For," I said, "I have not met,
White one, any folk as yet
Who would send no blessing up,
Looking on a face like thine;
For thou art as Joseph's cup,
And by thee might they divine.

"Nay! but thou a spirit art;
Men shall take thee in the mart
For the ghost of their best thought,
Raised at noon, and near them
brought;
Or the prayer they made last night,
Set before them all in white."

And I put out my rash hand,
For I thought to draw to land
The white lily. Was it fit
Such a blossom should expand,
Fair enough for a world's wonder,
And no mortal gather it?
No. I strove, and it went under,
And I drew, but it went down;
And the water-weeds' long tresses,
And the overlapping cresses,
Sullied its admired crown.
Then along the river strand,
Trailing, wrecked, it came to land,
Of its beauty half despoiled,
And its snowy pureness soiled:
O! I took it in my hand, —
You will never see it now,
White and golden as it grew:
No, I cannot show it you,
Nor the cheerful town endow
With the freshness of its brow.

If a royal painter, great
With the colors dedicate
To a dove's neck, a sea-bight,
And the flickerings over white
Mountain sunimits far away, —
One content to give his mind
To the enrichment of mankind,
And the laying up of light
In men's houses, — on that day,
Could have passed in kingly mood,
Would he ever have endued
Canvas with the peerless thing,
In the grace that it did bring,
And the light that o'er it flowed,
With the pureness that it showed,
And the pureness that it meant?
Could he skill to make it seen
As he saw? For this, I ween,
He were likewise impotent.

II.

I opened the doors of my heart.

And behold,
There was music within and a song,
And echoes did feed on the sweetness,
repeating it long.
I opened the doors of my heart. And
behold,
There was music that played itself out
in æolian notes;
Then was heard, as a far-away bell at
long intervals tolled,
That murmurs and floats,
And presently dieth, forgotten of forest
and wild,
And comes in all passion again and a
tremblement soft,
That maketh the listener full oft
To whisper, "Ah! would I might hear
it forever and aye,
When I toil in the heat of the day,
When I walk in the cold."

I opened the door of my heart. And
behold,
There was music within, and a song.
But while I was hearkening, lo, black-
ness without, thick and strong,
Came up and came over, and all that
sweet fluting was drowned,
I could hear it no more;

For the welkin was moaning, the waters
 were stirred on the shore,
 And trees in the dark all around
 Were shaken. It thundered. "Hark,
 hark! there is thunder to-night!
 The sullen long wave rears her head,
 and comes down with a will;
 The awful white tongues are let loose,
 and the stars are all dead;—
 There is thunder! it thunders! and
 ladders of light

Run up. There is thunder!" I
 said,
 "Loud thunder! it thunders! and up
 in the dark overhead,
 A down-pouring cloud (there is thun-
 der!), a down-pouring cloud
 Hails out her fierce message, and quiv-
 ers the deep in its bed,
 And cowers the earth held at bay; and
 they mutter aloud,
 And pause with an ominous tremble,
 till, great in their rage,
 The heavens and earth come together,
 and meet with a crash;
 And the fight is so fell as if Time had
 come down with the flash,
 And the story of life was all read,
 And the Giver had turned the last
 page

Now their bar the pent water-floods
 lash,
 And the forest trees give out their lan-
 guage austere with great age;
 And there flieth o'er moor and o'er
 hill,
 And there heaveth at intervals wide,
 The long sob of nature's great passion,
 as loath to subside,
 Until quiet drop down on the tide,
 And mad Echo hath moaned herself
 still.

Lo! or ever I was 'ware,
 In the silence of the air,
 Through my heart's wide-open door,
 Music floated forth once more,
 Floated to the world's dark rim,
 And looked over with a hymn;
 Then came home with flutings fine,
 And discoursed in tones divine
 Of a certain grief of mine;

And went downward and went in,
 Glimpses of my soul to win,
 And discovered such a deep
 That I could not choose but weep,
 For it lay, a land-locked sea,
 Fathomless and dim to me.

O the song! it came and went,
 Went and came.

I have not learned
 Half the lore whereto it yearned,
 Half the magic that it meant.
 Water booming in a cave;
 Or the swell of some long wave,
 Setting in from unrevealed
 Countries; or a foreign tongue,
 Sweetly talked and deftly sung,
 While the meaning is half sealed;
 May be like it. You have heard
 Also;—can you find a word
 For the naming of such song?
 No; a name would do it wrong.
 You have heard it in the night,
 In the dropping rain's despite,
 In the midnight darkness deep,
 When the children were asleep,
 And the wife—no, let that be;
 SHE asleep! She knows right well
 What the song to you and me,
 While we breathe, can never tell;
 She hath heard its faultless flow,
 Where the roots of music grow.

While I listened, like young birds,
 Hints were fluttering; almost words,—
 Leaned and leaned, and nearer came;—
 Everything had changed its name.

Sorrow was a ship, I found,
 Wrecked with them that in her are,
 On an island richer far
 Than the port where they were bound.
 Fear was but the awful boom
 Of the old great bell of doom,
 Tolling, far from earthly air,
 For all worlds to go to prayer.
 Pain, that to us mortal clings,
 But the pushing of our wings,
 That we have no use for yet,
 And the uprooting of our feet
 From the soil where they are set,
 And the land we reckon sweet.

Love in growth, the grand deceit
Whereby men the perfect greet ;
Love in wane, the blessing sent
To be (howsoe'er it went)
Nevermore with earth content.

O, full sweet, and O, full high,
Ran that music up the sky ;
But I cannot sing it you,
More than I can make you view,
With my paintings labial,
Sitting up in awful row,
White old men majestical,
Mountains, in their gowns of snow,
Ghosts of kings ; as my two eyes,
Looking over speckled skies,
See them now. About their knees,
Half in haze, there stands at ease
A great army of green hills,
Some bareheaded ; and, behold,
Small green mosses creep on some.
Those be mighty forests old ;
And white avalanches come
Through yon rents, where now distils
Sheeny silver, pouring down
To a tune of old renown,
Cutting narrow pathways through
Gentian belts of airy blue,
To a zone where starwort blows,
And long reaches of the rose.

So, that haze all left behind,
Down the chestnut forests wind,
Past yon jagged spires, where yet
Foot of man was never set ;
Past a castle yawning wide,
With a great breach in its side,
To a nest-like valley, where,
Like a sparrow's egg in hue,
Lie two lakes, and teach the true
Color of the sea-maid's hair.

What beside? The world beside!
Drawing down and down to greet
Cottage clusters at our feet, —
Every scent of summer tide, —
Flowery pastures all aglow
(Men and women mowing go
Up and down them) ; also soft
Floating of the film aloft,
Fluttering of the leaves aloft.
Is this told? It is not told.
Where's the danger? where's the cold

Slippery danger up the steep?
Where yon shadow fallen asleep?
Chirping bird and tumbling spray,
Light, work, laughter, scent of hay,
Peace, and echo, where are they?

Ah, they sleep, sleep all untold ;
Memory must their grace enfold
Silently ; and that high song
Of the heart, it doth belong
To the hearers. Not a whit,
Though a chief musician heard,
Could he make a tune for it.

Though a lute full deftly strung,
And the sweetest bird e'er sung,
Could have tried it, — O, the lute
For that wondrous song were mute,
And the bird would do her part,
Falter, fail, and break her heart, —
Break her heart, and furl her wings,
On the unexpressive strings.

GLADYS AND HER ISLAND.

*(On the Advantages of the Poetical
Temperament.)*

AN IMPERFECT FABLE WITH A DOUBT-
FUL MORAL.

O HAPPY Gladys! I rejoice with her,
For Gladys saw the island.

It was thus :
They gave a day for pleasure in the
school
Where Gladys taught ; and all the
other girls
Were taken out to picnic in a wood.
But it was said, " We think it were not
well
That little Gladys should acquire a
taste
For pleasure, going about, and needless
change.
It would not suit her station : discon-
tent
Might come of it ; and all her duties
now

She does so pleasantly, that we were
 best
 To keep her humble." So they said
 to her,
 "Gladys, we shall not want you, all to-
 day.
 Look, you are free; you need not sit at
 work:
 No, you may take a long and pleasant
 walk
 Over the sea-cliff, or upon the beach
 Among the visitors."

Then Gladys blushed
 For joy, and thanked them. What! a
 holiday,
 A whole one, for herself! How good,
 how kind!
 With that, the marshalled carriages
 drove off;
 And Gladys, sobered with her weight
 of joy,
 Stole out beyond the groups upon the
 beach—
 The children with their wooden spades,
 the band
 That played for lovers, and the sunny
 stir
 Of cheerful life and leisure—to the
 rocks,
 For these she wanted most, and there
 was time
 To mark them; how like ruined organs
 prone
 They lay, or leaned their giant fluted
 pipes,
 And let the great white-crested reck'less
 wave
 Beat out their booming melody.

"The sea
 Was filled with light; in clear blue
 caverns curled
 The breakers, and they ran, and seemed
 to romp,
 As playing at some rough and danger-
 ous game,
 While all the nearer waves rushed in to
 help,
 And all the farther heaved their heads
 to peep,
 And tossed the fishing-boats. Then
 Gladys laughed,

And said, "O happy tide, to be so
 lost
 In sunshine, that one dare not look at
 it;
 And lucky cliffs, to be so brown and
 warm;
 And yet how lucky are the shadows,
 too,
 That lurk beneath their ledges. It is
 strange,
 That in remembrance though I lay
 them up,
 They are forever, when I come to
 them,
 Better than I had thought. O, some-
 thing yet
 I had forgotten. Oft I say, 'At least
 This picture is imprinted; thus and
 thus,
 The sharpened serried jags run up, run
 out,
 Layer on layer.' And I look—up—
 up—
 High, higher up again, till far aloft
 They cut into their ether—brown, and
 clear,
 And perfect. And I, saying, 'This is
 mine,
 To keep,' retire; but shortly come
 again,
 And they confound me with a glorious
 change.
 The low sun out of rain-clouds stares at
 them;
 They redden, and their edges drip with
 —what?
 I know not, but 'tis red. It leaves no
 stain,
 For the next morning they stand up
 like ghosts
 In a sea-shroud, and fifty thousand
 mews
 Sit there, in long white files, and chat-
 ter on,
 Like silly school-girls in their silliest
 mood.

"There is the boulder where we always
 turn.
 O, I have longed to pass it; now I
 will.
 What would THEY say? for one must
 slip and spring;

'Young ladies! Gladys! I am shocked.

My dears,

Decorum, if you please: turn back at once.

Gladys, we blame you most; you should have looked

Before you.' Then they sigh, — how kind they are! —

'What will become of you, if all your life

You look a long way off? — look anywhere,

And everywhere, instead of at your feet,

And where they carry you!' Ah, well, I know

It is a pity," Gladys said; "but then We cannot all be wise: happy for me That other people are.

"And yet I wish, —

For sometimes very right and serious thoughts

Come to me, — I do wish that they would come

When they are wanted! — when I teach the sums

On rainy days, and when the practising

I count to, and the din goes on and on, Still the same tune and still the same mistake,

Then I am wise enough: sometimes I feel

Quite old. I think that it will last, and say,

'Now my reflections do me credit! now

I am a woman!' and I wish they knew

How serious all my duties look to me, And how my heart hushed down and shaded lies,

Just like the sea, when low, convenient clouds

Come over, and drink all its sparkles up.

But does it last? Perhaps, that very day,

The front door opens: out we walk in pairs;

And I am so delighted with this world, That suddenly has grown, being new washed,

To such a smiling, clean, and thankful world,

And with a tender face shining through tears,

Looks up into the sometime lowering sky,

That has been angry, but is reconciled, And just forgiving her, that I, — that I, —

O, I forget myself: what matters how! And then I hear (but always kindly said)

Some words that pain me so, — but just, but true:

'For if your place in this establishment Be but subordinate, and if your birth

Be lowly, it the more behooves — Well, well,

No more. We see that you are sorry.' Yes!

I am always sorry THEN; but now, — O, now,

Here is a sight more beautiful than all."

"And did they scold her, then, my pretty one?

And did she want to be as wise as they, —

To bear a bucklered heart and priggish mind?

Ay, you may crow; she did! but no, no, no,

The night-time will not let her; all the stars

Say nay to that; the old sea laughs at her.

Why, Gladys is a child; she has not skill

To shut herself within her own small cell,

And build the door up, and to say, 'Poor me!

I am a prisoner;' then to take hewn stones,

And, having built the windows up, to say,

'O, it is dark! there is no sunshine here;

There never has been.' "

Strange! how very strange!

A woman passing Gladys with a babe,

To whom she spoke these words, and
 only looked
 Upon the babe, who crowed and pulled
 her curls,
 And never looked at Gladys. never
 once.
 "A simple child," she added, and went
 by,
 "To want to change her greater for
 their less;
 But Gladys shall not do it, no, not she;
 We love her—don't we?—far too
 well for that."

Then Gladys, flushed with shame and
 keen surprise,
 "How could she be so near, and I not
 know?
 And here I spoken out my thought
 aloud?
 I must have done, forgetting. It is
 well
 She walks so fast, for I am hungry now,
 And here is water cantering down the
 cliff,
 And here a shell to catch it with, and
 here
 The round plump buns they gave me,
 and the fruit.
 Now she is gone behind the rock. O,
 rare
 To be alone!" So Gladys sat her
 down,
 Unpacked her little basket, ate and
 drank,
 Then pushed her hands into the warm
 dry sand,
 And thought the earth was happy,
 and she too
 Was going round with it in happiness,
 That holiday. "What was it that she
 said?"
 Quoth Gladys, cogitating; "they were
 kind,
 The words that woman spoke. She
 does not know!
 'Her greater for their less,'—it makes
 me laugh,—
 But yet," sighed Gladys, "though it
 must be good
 To look and to admire, one should not
 wish
 To steal *THEIR* virtues, and to put them
 on,

Like feathers from another wing; be-
 side,
 That calm, and that grave conscious-
 ness of worth,
 When all is said, would little suit with
 me,
 Who am not worthy When our
 thoughts are born,
 Though they be good and humble, one
 should mind
 How they are reared, or some will go
 astray
 And shame their mother. Cain and
 Abel both
 Were only once removed from inno-
 cence.
 Why did I envy them? That was not
 good;
 Yet it began with my humility."

But as she spake, lo, Gladys raised her
 eyes,
 And right before her, on the horizon's
 edge,
 Behold, an island! First, she looked
 away
 Along the solid rocks and steadfast
 shore,
 For she was all amazed, believing not,
 And then she looked again, and there
 again
 Behold, an island! And the tide had
 turned,
 The milky sea had got a purple rim,
 And from the rim that mountain island
 rose,
 Purple, with two high peaks, the
 northern peak
 The higher, and with fell and precipice,
 It ran down steeply to the water's
 brink;
 But all the southern line was long and
 soft,
 Broken with tender curves, and, as she
 thought,
 Covered with forest or with sward.
 But, look!
 The sun was on the island; and he
 showed
 On either peak a dazzling cap of snow.
 Then Gladys held her breath; she said,
 "Indeed,
 Indeed it is an island: how is this,
 I never saw it till this fortunate

Rare holiday?" And while she strained
her eyes,
She thought that it began to fade ; but
not

To change as clouds do, only to with-
draw .

And melt into its azure ; and at last,
Little by little, from her hungry heart,
• That longed to draw things marvellous
to itself,

And yearned towards the riches and the
great

Abundance of the beauty God hath
made,

It passed away. Tears started in her
eyes,

And when they dropt, the mountain
isle was gone ;

The careless sea had quite forgotten it,
And all was even as it had been before.

And Gladys wept, but there was luxury
In her self-pity, while she softly sobbed,
"O, what a little while! I am afraid
I shall forget that purple mountain isle,
The lovely hollows atween her snow-
clad peaks,

The grace of her upheaval where she
lay

Well up against the open. O, my heart,
Now I remember how this holiday
Will soon be done, and now my life
goes on

Not fed ; and only in the noonday walk
Let to look silently at what it wants,
Without the power to wait or pause
awhile,

And understand and draw within itself
The richness of the earth. A holiday!
How few I have! I spend the silent
time

At work, while all THEIR pupils are
gone home,

And feel myself remote. They shine
apart ;

They are great planets, I a little orb ;
My little orbit far within their own
Turns, and approaches not. But yet,
the more

I am alone when those I teach return ;
For they, as planets of some other sun,
Not mine, have paths that can but
meet my ring

Once in a cycle. O, how poor I am!

I have not got laid up in this blank
heart

Any indulgent kisses given me
Because I had been good, or, yet more
sweet,

Because my childhood was itself a
good

Attractive thing for kisses, tender
praise,

And comforting. An orphan-school at
best

Is a cold mother in the winter time
('Twas mostly winter when new or-
phans came),

An unregardful mother in the spring.

"Yet once a year (I did mine wrong)
we went

To gather cowslips. How we thought
on it

Beforehand, pacing, pacing the dull
street,

To that one tree, the only one we saw
From April, — if the cowslips were in
bloom

So early ; or, if not, from opening
May

Even to September. Then there came
the feast

At Epping. If it rained that day, it
rained

For a whole year to us ; we could not
think

Of fields and hawthorn hedges, and the
leaves

Fluttering, but still it rained, and ever
rained.

"Ah, well, but I am here ; but I have
seen

The gay gorse bushes in their flowering
time ;

I know the scent of bean-fields ; I have
heard

The satisfying murmur of the main."

The woman! she came round the rock
again

With her fair baby, and she sat her
down

By Gladys, murmuring, "Who forbade
the grass

To grow by visitations of the dew?

Who said in ancient time to the desert
 pool,
 'Thou shalt not wait for angel visitors
 To trouble thy still water?' Must we
 bide
 At home? The lore, beloved, shall fly
 to us
 On a pair of sumptuous wings. Or
 may we breathe
 Without? O, we shall draw to us the
 air
 That times and mystery feed on. This
 shall lay
 Unhidden hands upon the heart o' the
 world,
 And feel it beating. Rivers shall run
 on,
 Full of sweet language as a lover's
 mouth,
 Delivering of a tune to make her youth
 More beautiful than wheat when it is
 green.

"What else? — (O, none shall envy
 her!) The rain
 And the wild weather will be most her
 own,
 And talk with her o' nights; and if the
 winds
 Have seen aught wondrous, they will
 tell it her
 In a mouthful of strange moans, — will
 bring from far,
 Her ears being keen, the lowing and
 the mad,
 Masterful tramping of the bison herds,
 Tearing down headlong with their
 bloodshot eyes,
 In savage rifts of hair; the crack and
 creak
 Of ice-floes in the frozen sea, the cry
 Of the white bears, all in a dim blue
 world
 Mumbling their meals by twilight; or
 the rock
 And majesty of motion, when their
 heads
 Primeval trees toss in a sunny storm,
 And hail their nuts down on unweeded
 fields.
 No holidays," quoth she; "drop, drop,
 O, drop,
 Thou tired skylark, and go up no
 more;

You lime-trees, cover not your head
 with bees,
 Nor give out your good smell. She
 will not look;
 No, Gladys cannot draw your sweet-
 ness in,
 For lack of holidays." So Gladys
 thought,
 "A most strange woman, and she talks
 of me."
 With that a girl ran up: "Mother,"
 she said,
 "Come out of this brown bight, I pray
 you now,
 It smells of fairies." Gladys thereon
 thought,
 "The mother will not speak to me,
 perhaps
 The daughter may," and asked her
 courteously,
 "What do the fairies smell of?" But
 the girl
 With peevish pout replied, "You know,
 you know."
 "Not I," said Gladys; then she an-
 swered her,
 "Something like buttercups. But,
 mother, come,
 And whisper up a porpoise from the
 foam,
 Because I want to ride."

Full slowly, then,
 The mother rose, and ever kept her
 eyes
 Upon her little child. "You freakish
 maid,"
 Said she, "now mark me, if I call you
 one,
 You shall not scold nor make him take
 you far."

"I only want — you know I only
 want,"
 The girl replied — "to go and play
 awhile
 Upon the sand by Lagos." Then she
 turned
 And muttered low, "Mother, is this
 the girl
 Who saw the island?" But the mo-
 ther frowned.
 "When may she go to it?" the
 daughter asked.

And Gladys, following them, gave all
her mind
To hear the answer. "When she wills
to go;
For yonder comes to shore the ferry-
boat."
Then Gladys turned to look, and even
so
It was; a ferry-boat, and far away
Reared in the offing, lo, the purple
peaks
Of her loved island.

Then she raised her arms,
And ran toward the boat, crying out,
"O rare,
The island! fair befall the island; let
Me reach the island." And she sprang
on board,
And after her stepped in the freakish
maid
And the fair mother, brooding o'er her
child;
And this one took the helm, and that
let go
The sail, and off they flew, and fur-
rowed up
A flaky hill before, and left behind
A sobbing, snake-like tail of creamy
foam;
And dancing hither, thither, sometimes
shot
Toward the island; then, when Gladys
looked,
Were leaving it to leeward. And the
maid
Whistled a wind to come and rock the
craft,
And would be leaning down her head
to mew
At cat-fish, then lift out into her lap
And dandle baby-seals, which, having
kissed,
She flung to their sleek mothers, till
her own
Rebuked her in good English, after
cried,
"Luff, luff, we shall be swamped."
"I will not luff,"
Sobbed the fair mischief; "you are
cross to me."
"For shame!" the mother shrieked;
"luff, luff, my dear;

Kiss and be friends, and thou shalt have
the fish
With the curly tail to ride on." So she
did,
And presently, a dolphin bouncing
up,
She sprang upon his slippery back, —
"Farewell,"
She laughed, was off, and all the sea
grew calm.

Then Gladys was much happier, and
was 'ware
In the smooth weather that this woman
talked
Like one in sleep, and murmured cer-
tain thoughts
Which seemed to be like echoes of her
own.
She nodded, "Yes, the girl is going
now
To her own island. Gladys poor? Not
she!
Who thinks so? Once I met a man in
white,
Who said to me, 'The thing that might
have been
Is called, and questioned why it hath
not been;
And can it give good reason, it is set
Beside the actual, and reckoned in
To fill the empty gaps of life.' Ah,
so
The possible stands by us ever fresh,
Fairer than aught which any life hath
owned,
And makes divine amends. Now this
was set
Apart from kin, and -not ordained a
home;
An equal; — and not suffered to fence
in
A little plot of earthly good, and say,
'Tis mine; but in bereavement of the
part,
O, yet to taste the whole, — to under-
stand
The grandeur of the story, not to feel
Satiated with good possessed, but ever-
more
A healthful hunger for the great idea,
The beauty and the blessedness of
life.

"Lo, now, the shadow!" quoth she,
 breaking off,
 "We are in the shadow." Then did
 Gladys turn,
 And, O, the mountain with the purple
 peaks
 Was close at hand. It cast a shadow
 out,
 And they were in it: and she saw the
 snow,
 And under that the rocks, and under
 that
 The pines, and then the pasturage;
 and saw
 Numerous dips, and undulations rare,
 Running down seaward, all astir with
 life
 Long canes, and lofty feathers; for the
 palms
 And spice-trees of the south, nay, every
 growth,
 Meets in that island.

So that woman ran
 The boat ashore, and Gladys set her
 foot
 Thereon. Then all at once much laughter
 rose;
 Invisible folks set up exultant shouts,
 "It all belongs to Gladys;" and she
 ran
 And hid herself among the nearest trees
 And panted, shedding tears.

So she looked round,
 And saw that she was in a banyan
 grove,
 Full of wild peacocks, — pecking on the
 grass,
 A flickering mass of eyes, blue, green,
 and gold,
 Or reaching out their jewelled necks,
 where high
 They sat in rows along the boughs. No
 tree
 Cumbered with creepers let the sun-
 shine through,
 But it was caught in scarlet cups, and
 poured
 From these on amber tufts of bloom,
 and dropped
 Lower on azure stars. The air was
 still,

As if awaiting somewhat, or asleep,
 And Gladys was the only thing that
 moved,
 Excepting — no, they were not birds —
 what then?
 Glorified rainbows with a living soul?
 While they passed through a sunbeam
 they were seen,
 Not elsewhere, but they were present
 yet
 In shade. They were at work, pome-
 granate fruit
 That lay about removing, — purple
 grapes,
 That clustered in the path, clearing
 aside.
 Through a small spot of light would
 pass and go
 The glorious happy mouth and two fair
 eyes
 Of somewhat that made rustlings where
 it went;
 But when a beam would strike the
 ground sheer down,
 Behold them! they had wings, and they
 would pass
 One after other with the sheeny fans,
 Bearing them slowly, that their hues
 were seen,
 Tender as russet crimson dropt on
 snows,
 Or where they turned flashing with gold
 and dashed
 With purple glooms. And they had
 feet, but these
 Did barely touch the ground. And they
 took heed
 Not to disturb the waiting quietness;
 Nor rouse up fawns, that slept beside
 their dams;
 Nor the fair leopard, with her sleek
 paws laid
 Across her little drowsy cubs; nor
 swans,
 That, floating, slept upon a glassy
 pool;
 Nor rosy cranes, all slumbering in the
 reeds,
 With heads beneath their wings. For
 this, you know,
 Was Eden. She was passing through
 the trees
 That made a ring about it, and she
 caught

A glimpse of glades beyond. All she
 had seen
 Was nothing to them ; but words are
 not made
 To tell that tale. No wind was let to
 blow,
 And all the doves were bidden to hold
 their peace.
 Why? One was working in a valley
 near,
 And none might look that way. It was
 understood
 That He had nearly ended that His
 work ;
 For two shapes met, and one to other
 spake,
 Accessing him with, " Prince, what
 worketh He ? "
 Who whispered, " Lo ! He fashioneth
 red clay."
 And all at once a little trembling stir
 Was felt in the earth, and every creat-
 ure woke,
 And laid its head down, listening. It
 was known
 Then that the work was done ; the new-
 made king
 Had risen, and set his feet upon his
 realm,
 And it acknowledged him.

But in her path
 Came some one that withstood her, and
 he said,
 " What doest thou here ? " Then she
 did turn and flee,
 Among those colored spirits, through
 the grove,
 Trembling for haste ; it was not well
 with her
 Till she came forth of those thick ban-
 yan trees,
 And set her feet upon the common
 grass,
 And felt the common wind.

Yet once beyond,
 She could not choose but cast a back-
 ward glance.
 The lovely matted growth stood like a
 wall,
 And means of entering were not evi-
 dent, —

The gap had closed. But Gladys
 laughed for joy ;
 She said, " Remoteness and a multi-
 tude
 Of years are counted nothing here.
 Behold,
 To-day I have been in Eden. O, it
 blooms
 In my own island."

And she wandered on,
 Thinking, until she reached a place of
 palms,
 And all the earth was sandy where she
 walked, —
 Sandy and dry, — strewed with papy-
 rus-leaves,
 Old idols, rings and pottery, painted
 lids
 Of mummies (for perhaps it was the
 way
 That leads to dead old Egypt), and
 withal
 Excellent sunshine cut out sharp and
 clear
 The hot prone pillars, and the carven
 plinths, —
 Stone lotos cups, with petals dipped in
 sand,
 And wicked gods, and sphinxes bland,
 who sat
 And smiled upon the ruin. O, how
 still !
 Hot, blank, illuminated with the clear
 Stare of an unveiled sky. The dry
 stiff leaves
 Of palm-trees never rustled, and the
 soul
 Of that dead ancients was itself
 dead.
 She was above her ankles in the sand,
 When she beheld a rocky road, and,
 lo !
 It bare in it the ruts of chariot wheels,
 Which erst had carried to their pagan
 prayers
 The brown old Pharaohs ; for the ruts
 led on
 To a great cliff, that either was a cliff
 Or some dread shrine in ruins, —
 partly reared
 In front of that same cliff, and partly
 hewn

Or excavate within its heart. Great
 heaps
 Of sand and stones on either side there
 lay;
 And, as the girl drew on, rose out from
 each,
 As from a ghostly kennel, gods unblest,
 Dog-headed, and behind them winged
 things
 Like angels; and this carven multi-
 tude
 Hedged in, to right and left, the rocky
 road.

At last, the cliff, — and in the cliff a
 door
 Yawning: and she looked in, as down
 the throat
 Of some stupendous giant, and beheld
 No floor, but wide, worn flights of
 steps, that led
 Into a dimness. When the eyes could
 bear
 That change to gloom, she saw, flight
 after flight,
 Flight after flight, the worn, long stair
 go down,
 Smooth with the feet of nations dead
 and gone.
 So she did enter; also she went down
 'Till it was dark, and yet again went
 down,
 Till, gazing upward at that yawning
 door,
 It seemed no larger, in its height re-
 mote,
 Than a pin's head. But while, irreso-
 lute,
 She doubted of the end, yet farther
 down
 A slender ray of lamplight fell away
 Along the stair, as from a door ajar:
 To this again she felt her way, and
 stepped
 Adown the hollow stair, and reached
 the light;
 But fear fell on her, fear; and she for-
 bore
 Entrance, and listened. Ay! 'twas
 even so, —
 A sigh; the breathing as of one who
 slept
 And was disturbed. So she drew back
 awhile,

And trembled; then her doubting
 hand she laid
 Against the door, and pushed it; but
 the light
 Waned, faded, sank; and as she came
 within —
 Hark, hark! A spirit was it, and
 asleep?
 A spirit doth not breathe like clay.
 There hung
 A cresset from the roof, and thence ap-
 peared
 A flickering speck of light, and dis-
 appeared;
 Then dropped along the floor its elfish
 flakes,
 That fell on some one resting, in the
 gloom, —
 Somewhat, a spectral shadow, then a
 shape
 That loomed. It was a heifer, ay, and
 white,
 Breathing and languid through pro-
 longed repose.

Was it a heifer? all the marble floor
 Was milk-white also, and the cresset
 paled,
 And straight their whiteness grew con-
 fused and mixed.

But when the cresset, taking heart,
 bloomed out, —
 The whiteness, — and asleep again!
 but now
 It was a woman, robed, and with a
 face
 Lovely and dim. And Gladys while
 she gazed
 Murmured, "O terrible! I am afraid
 To breathe among these intermittent
 lives,
 That fluctuate in mystic solitude,
 And change and fade. Lo! where the
 goddess sits
 Dreaming on her dim throne; a cres-
 cent moon
 She wears upon her forehead. Ah!
 her frown
 Is mournful, and her slumber is not
 sweet.
 What dust thou hold, Isis, to thy cold
 breast?

A baby god with finger on his lips,
 Asleep, and dreaming of departed
 sway?
 Thy son. Hush, hush; he knoweth
 all the lore
 And sorcery of old Egypt; but his
 mouth
 He shuts; the secret shall be lost with
 him,
 He will not tell."

The woman coming down!
 "Child, what art doing here?" the
 woman said;
 "What wilt thou of Dame Isis and her
 bairn?"
*(Ay, ay, we see thee breathing in thy
 shroud,—
 Thy pretty shroud, all frilled and fur-
 belowed.)*
 The air is dim with dust of spiced
 bones.
 I mark a crypt down there. Tier upon
 tier
 Of painted coffers fills it. What if
 we,
 Passing, should slip, and crash into
 their midst, —
 Break the frail ancentry, and smoth-
 ered lie,
 Tumbled among the ribs of queens and
 kings,
 And all the gear they took to bed with
 them!
 Horrible! let us hence.

And Gladys said,
 "O, they are rough to mount, those
 stairs;" but she
 Took her and laughed, and up the
 mighty flight
 Shot like a meteor with her. "There,"
 said she;
 "The light is sweet when one has
 smelled of graves,
 Down in unholy heathen gloom; fare-
 well."
 She pointed to a gateway, strong and
 high,
 Reared of hewn stones; but, look! in
 lieu of gate,
 There was a glittering cobweb drawn
 across,

And on the lintel there were writ these
 words:
 "Ho, every one that cometh, I divide
 What hath been from what might be,
 and the line
 Hangeth before thee as a spider's
 web;
 Yet, wouldst thou enter, thou must
 break the line,
 Or else forbear the hill."

The maiden said,
 "So, cobweb, I will break thee." And
 she passed
 Among some oak-trees on the farther
 side,
 And waded through the bracken round
 their bolls,
 Until she saw the open, and drew on
 Toward the edge o' the wood, where it
 was mixed
 With pines and heathery places wild
 and fresh.
 Here she put up a creature, that ran on
 Before her, crying, "Tint, tint, tint,"
 and turned,
 Sat up, and stared at her with elfish
 eyes,
 Jabbering of gramarye, one Michael
 Scott,
 The wizard that wonned somewhere
 underground,
 With other talk enough to make one
 fear
 To walk in lonely places. After passed
 A man-at-arms, William of Deloraine;
 He shook his head, "An' if I list to
 tell,"
 Quoth he, "I know, but how it mat-
 ters not;"
 Then crossed himself, and muttered of
 a clap
 Of thunder, and a shape in Amice
 gray,
 But still it mouthed at him, and whim-
 pered, "Tint,
 Tint, tint." "There shall be wild
 work some day soon,"
 Quoth he, "thou limb of darkness: he
 will come,
 Thy master, push a hand up, catch
 thee, imp,
 And so good Christians shall have
 peace, perdie."

Then Gladys was so frightened, that
 she ran,
 And got away, towards a grassy down,
 Where sheep and lambs were feeding,
 with a boy
 To tend them. 'Twas the boy who
 wears that herb
 Called heart's-ease in his bosom, and
 he sang
 So sweetly to his flock, that she stole
 on
 Nearer to listen. "O Content, Con-
 tent,
 Give me," sang he, "thy tender com-
 pany.
 I feed my flock among the myrtles;
 all
 My lambs are twins, and they have laid
 them down
 Along the slopes of Beulah. Come,
 fair love,
 From the other side the river, where
 their harps
 Thou hast been helping them to tune.
 O come,
 And pitch thy tent by mine; let me
 behold
 Thy mouth, — that even in slumber
 talks of peace, —
 Thy well-set locks, and dove-like coun-
 tenance."

And Gladys hearkened, couched upon
 the grass,
 Till she had rested; then did ask the
 boy,
 For it was afternoon, and she was fain
 To reach the shore, "Which is the
 path, I pray,
 That leads one to the water?" But he
 said,
 "Dear lass, I only know the narrow
 way,
 The path that leads one to the golden
 gate
 Across the river." So she wandered
 on;
 And presently her feet grew cool, the
 grass
 Standing so high, and thyme being thick
 and soft.
 The air was full of voices, and the scent
 Of mountain blossom loaded all its
 wafts;

For she was on the slopes of a goodly
 mount,
 And reared in such a sort that it looked
 down
 Into the deepest valleys, darkest glades,
 And richest plains o' the island. It
 was set
 Midway between the snows majestic
 And a wide level, such as men would
 choose
 For growing wheat; and some one said
 to her,
 "It is the hill Parnassus." So she
 walked
 Yet on its lower slope, and she could
 hear
 The calling of an unseen multitude
 To some upon the mountain, "Give us
 more;"
 And others said, "We are tired of this
 old world:
 Make it look new again." Then there
 were some
 Who answered lovingly — (the dead yet
 speak
 From that high mountain, as the living
 do);
 But others sang desponding, "We have
 kept
 The vision for a chosen few: we love
 Fit audience better than a rough huzza
 From the unreasoning crowd."

Then words came up:
 "There was a time, you poets, was a
 time
 When all the poetry was ours, and
 made
 By some who climbed the mountain
 from our midst.
 We loved it then, we sang it in our
 streets.
 O, it grows obsolete! Be you as they:
 Our heroes die and drop away from us;
 Oblivion folds them 'neath her dusky
 wing,
 Fair copies wasted to the hungering
 world.
 Save them. We fall so low for lack of
 them,
 That many of us think scorn of honest
 trade,
 And take no pride in our own shops;
 who care

Only to quit a calling, will not make
 The calling what it might be : who
 despise
 Their work, Fate laughs at, and doth
 let the work
 Dull, and degrade them."

Then did Gladys smile :
 "Heroes!" quoth she; "yet, now I
 think on it,
 There was the jolly goldsmith, brave
 Sir Hugh,
 Certes, a hero ready-made. Methinks
 I see him burnishing of golden gear,
 Tankard and charger, and a-muttering
 low,
 'London is thirsty' — (then he weighs a
 chain):
 'Tis an ill thing, my masters. I would
 give
 The worth of this, and many such as
 this,
 To bring it water."

"Ay, and after him
 There came up Guy of London, lettered
 son
 O' the honest lighterman. I'll think
 on him,
 Leaning upon the bridge on summer
 eves,
 After his shop was closed: a still, grave
 man,
 With melancholy eyes. 'While these
 are hale,'
 He saith, when he looks down and
 marks the crowd
 Cheerily working; where the river
 marge
 Is blocked with ships and boats; and
 all the wharves
 Swarm, and the cranes swing in with
 merchandise, —
 'While these are hale, 'tis well, 'tis
 very well.
 But, O good Lord,' saith he, 'when
 these are sick, —
 I fear me, Lord, this excellent work-
 manship
 Of Thine is counted for a cumbrance
 then.
 Ay, ay, my hearties! many a man of
 you,

Struck down, or maimed, or fevered,
 shrinks away,
 And, mastered in that fight for lack of
 aid,
 Creeps shivering to a corner, and there
 dies.'
 Well, we have heard the rest.

"Ah, next I think
 Upon the merchant captain, stout of
 heart
 To dare and to endure. 'Robert,' saith
 he
 (The navigator Knox to his manful
 son),
 'I sit a captive from the ship detained;
 This heathenry doth let thee visit her.
 Remember, son, if thou, alas! shouldst
 fail
 To ransom thy poor father, they are
 free
 As yet, the mariners; have wives at
 home,
 As I have; ay, and liberty is sweet
 To all men. For the ship, she is not
 ours,
 Therefore, 'beseech thee, son, lay on
 the mate
 This my command, to leave me, and set
 sail.
 As for thyself —' 'Good father,' saith
 the son;
 'I will not, father, ask your blessing
 now,
 Because, for fair, or else for evil, fate,
 We two shall meet again.' And so they
 did.
 The dusky men, peeling off cinnamon,
 And beating nutmeg clusters from the
 tree,
 Ransom and bribe contemned. The
 good ship sailed, —
 The son returned to share his father's
 cell.

"O, there are many such. Would I
 had wit
 Their worth to sing!" With that, she
 turned her feet.
 "I am tired now," said Gladys, "of
 their talk
 Around this hill Parnassus." And, be-
 hold,

A piteous sight, — an old, blind, gray-beard king
 Led by a fool with bells. Now this was loved
 Of the crowd below the hill ; and when he called
 For his lost kingdom, and bewailed his age,
 And plained on his unkind daughters, they were known
 To say, that if the best of gold and gear
 Could have bought him back his kingdom, and made kind
 The hard hearts which had broken his erewhile,
 They would have gladly paid it from their store,
 Many times over. What is done is done,
 No help. The ruined majesty passed on.
 And, look you ! one who met her as she walked
 Showed her a mountain nymph lovely as light.
 Her name *Enone* ; and she mourned and mourned,
 “O Mother *Ida*,” and she could not cease,
 No, nor be comforted.

And after this,
 Soon there came by, arrayed in Norman cap
 And kirtle, an Arcadian villager,
 Who said, “I pray you, have you chanced to meet
 One *Gabriel*?” and she sighed ; but Gladys took
 And kissed her hand : she could not answer her,
 Because she guessed the end.

With that it drew
 To evening ; and as Gladys wandered on
 In the calm weather, she beheld the wave,
 And she ran down to set her feet again
 On the sea-margin, which was covered thick
 With white shell-skeletons. The sky was red

As wine. The water played among bare ribs
 Of many wrecks, that lay half-buried there
 In the sand. She saw a cave, and moved thereto
 To ask her way, and one so innocent
 Came out to meet her, that, with marvelling mute,
 She gazed and gazed into her sea-blue eyes,
 For in them beamed the untaught ecstasy
 Of childhood, that lives on though youth be come,
 And love just born.

She could not choose but name her shipwrecked prince,
 All blushing. She told Gladys many things
 That are not in the story, — things, in sooth, [now
 That *Prospero* her father knew. But 'Twas evening, and the sun dropped ; purple stripes
 In the sea were copied from some clouds that lay
 Out in the west. And lo ! the boat, and more,
 The freakish thing to take fair Gladys home
 She mowed at her, but Gladys took the helm :
 “Peace, peace !” she said ; “be good : you shall not steer,
 For I am your liege lady.” Then she sang
 The sweetest song she knew all the way home.

So Gladys set her feet upon the sand ;
 While in the sunset glory died away
 The peaks of that blest island.

“Fare you well,
 My country, my own kingdom,” then she said,
 “Till I go visit you again, farewell.”

She looked toward their house with whom she dwelt, —
 The carriages were coming. Hastening up,

She was in time to meet them at the door,
 And lead the sleepy little ones within;
 And some were cross and shivered,
 and her dames
 Were weary and right hard to please;
 but she
 Felt like a beggar suddenly endowed
 With a warm cloak to 'fend her from
 the cold.
 "For, come what will," she said, "I
 had *to-day*.
 There is an island."

THE MORAL.

What is the moral? Let us think
 awhile,
 Taking the editorial *WE* to help,
 It sounds respectable.

The moral; yes,
 We always read, when any fable ends,
 "Hence we may learn." A moral
 must be found.
 What do you think of this: "Hence
 we may learn
 That dolphins swim about the coast of
 Wales,
 And Admiralty maps should now be
 drawn
 By teacher-girls, because their sight is
 keen,
 And they can spy out islands." Will
 that do?
 No, that is far too plain, — too evident.

Perhaps a general moralizing vein —
 (We know we have a happy knack that
 way.
 We have observed, moreover, that
 young men
 Are fond of good advice, and so are
 girls;
 Especially of that meandering kind
 Which, winding on so sweetly, treats
 of all
 They ought to be and do and think and
 wear,
 As one may say, from creeds to com-
 forters.

Indeed, we much prefer that sort our-
 selves,
 So soothing). Good, a moralizing vein:
 That is the thing; but how to manage
 it?

"Hence we may learn," if we be so
 inclined,
 That life goes best with those who take
 it best;
 That wit can spin from work a golden
 robe
 To queen it in; that who can paint at
 will
 A private picture-gallery, should not
 cry
 For shillings that will let him in to
 look
 At some by others painted. Further-
 more,
 Hence we may learn, you poets — (*and
 we count*
*For poets all who ever felt that such
 They were, and all who secretly have
 known*
*That such they-could be; ay, more-
 over, all*
*Who wind the robes of ideality
 About the bareness of their lives, and
 hang*
*Comforting curtains, knit of fancy's
 yarn,*
*Nightly betwixt them and the frosty
 world*), —
 Hence we may learn, you poets, that
 of all
 We should be most content. The
 earth is given
 To us: we reign by virtue of a sense
 Which lets us hear the rhythm of that
 old verse,
 The ring of that old tune whereto she
 spins.
 Humanity is given to us: we reign
 By virtue of a sense which lets us in
 To know its troubles ere they have been
 told,
 And take them home and lull them into
 rest
 With mournfullest music. Time is
 given to us, —
 Time past, time future. Who, good
 sooth, beside
 Have seen it well, have walked this
 empty world

When she went steaming, and from
pulpy hills
Have marked the spurting of their
flamy crowns?

Have not we seen the tabernacle
pitched,
And peered between the linen curtains,
blue,
Purple, and scarlet, at the dimness
there,
And, frightened, have not dared to look
again?
But, quaint antiquity! beheld, we
thought,
A chest that might have held the manna
pot,
And Aaron's rod that budded. Ay, we
leaned
Over the edge of Britain, while the fleet
Of Cæsar loomed and neared; then,
afterwards,
We saw fair Venice looking at herself
In the glass below her, while her Doge
went forth
In all his bravery to the wedding.

However, counts for nothing to the
grace
We wot of in time future:—therefore
add,
And afterwards have done: "*Hence
we may learn,*"
That though it be a grand and comely
thing
To be unhappy—(and we think it is,
Because so many grand and clever
folk
Have found out reasons for unhappi-
ness,
And talked about uncomfortable
things,—
Low motives, bores, and shams, and
hollowness,
The hollowness o' the world, till we at
last
Have scarcely dared to jump or stamp,
for fear,
Being so hollow, it should break some
day,
And let us in),—yet, since we are not
grand,

O, not at all, and as for cleverness,
That may be or may not be,—it is well
For us to be as happy as we can!

Agreed; and with a word to the nobler
sex,
As thus: We pray you carry not your
guns
On the full cock; we pray you set your
pride
In its proper place, and never be
ashamed
Of any honest calling,—let us add,
And end: For all the rest, hold up your
heads
And mind your English.



SONGS WITH PRELUDES.



WEDLOCK.

THE sun was streaming in: I woke,
and said,
"Where is my wife,—that has been
made my wife
Only this year?" The casement stood
ajar:
I did but lift my head: The pear-tree
dropped,
The great white pear-tree dropped
with dew from leaves
And blossom, under heavens of happy
blue.

My wife had wakened first, and had
gone down
Into the orchard. All the air was
calm;
Audible humming filled it. At the
roots
Of peony bushes lay in rose-red heaps,
Or snowy, fallen bloom. The crag-like
hills
Were tossing down their silver messen-
gers,
And two brown foreigners, called cuck-
oo-birds,

Gave them good answer : all things else
were mute ;
An idle world lay listening to their talk,
They had it to themselves,

What ails my wife ?
I know not if aught ails her ; though
her step
Tell of a conscious quiet, lest I wake.
She moves between the almond-boughs,
and bends
One thick with bloom to look on it.
"O love !
A little while thou hast withdrawn thy-
self,
At unaware to think thy thoughts
alone :
How sweet, and yet pathetic to my
heart
The reason. Ah ! thou art no more
thine own.
Mine, mine, O love ! Tears gather
'neath my lids, —
Sorrowful tears for thy lost liberty,
Because it was so sweet. Thy liberty,
That yet, O love, thou wouldst not
have again.
No ; all is right. But who can give, or
bless,
Or take a blessing, but there comes
withal
Some pain ?"

She walks beside the lily bed,
And holds apart her gown ; she would
not hurt
The leaf-enfolded buds, that have not
looked
Yet on the daylight. O, thy locks are
brown, —
Fairest of colors ! — and a darker brown
The beautiful, dear, veiled, modest
eyes.
A bloom as of blush-roses covers her
Forehead, and throat, and cheek.
Health breathes with her,
And graceful vigor. Fair and wondrous
soul !
To think that thou art mine !

My wife came in,
And moved into the chamber. As for
me,

I heard, but lay as one that nothing
hears,
And feigned to be asleep.

I.

The racing river leaped and sang
Full blithely in the perfect weather,
All round the mountain echoes rang,
For blue and green were glad to-
gether.

II.

This rained out light from every part,
And that with songs of joy was
thrilling ;
But, in the hollow of my heart,
There ached a place that wanted
filling.

III.

Before the road and river meet,
And stepping-stones are wet and
glisten,
I heard a sound of laughter sweet,
And paused to like it, and to listen.

IV.

I heard the chanting waters flow,
The cushat's note, the bee's low
humming, —
Then turned the hedge, and did not
know —
How could I ? — that my time was
coming.

V.

A girl upon the highest stone,
Half doubtful of the deed, was stand-
ing,
So far the shallow flood had flown
Beyond the 'customed leap of land-
ing.

VI.

She knew not any need of me,
Yet me she waited all unweeting ;
We thought not I had crossed the sea,
And half the sphere to give her meet-
ing.

VII.

I waded out, her eyes I met,
 I wished the moments had been
 hours;
 I took her in my arms, and set
 Her dainty feet among the flowers.

VIII.

Her fellow-maids in copse and lane,
 Ah! still, methinks, I hear them
 calling;
 The wind's soft whisper in the plain,
 The cushat's coo, the water's falling.

IX.

But now it is a year ago,
 But now possession crowns endeavor;
 I took her in my heart, to grow
 And fill the hollow place forever.

REGRET.

O THAT word REGRET!
 There have been nights and morns
 when we have sighed,
 "Let us alone, Regret! We are content
 To throw thee all our past, so thou wilt
 sleep
 For aye." But it is patient, and it
 wakes;
 It hath not learned to cry itself to sleep,
 But plaineth on the bed that it is hard.

We did amiss when we did wish it gone
 And over: sorrows humanize our race;
 Tears are the showers that fertilize this
 world;
 And memory of things precious keepeth
 warm
 The heart that once did hold them.

They are poor
 That have lost nothing; they are
 poorer far
 Who, losing, have forgotten; they
 most poor
 Of all, who lose and wish they MIGHT
 forget.

For life is one, and in its warp and
 woof
 There runs a thread of gold that glitters
 fair,
 And sometimes in the pattern shows
 most sweet
 Where there are sombre colors. It is
 true
 That we have wept. But O! this
 thread of gold,
 We would not have it tarnish; let us
 turn
 Oft and look back upon the wondrous
 web,
 And when it shineth sometimes we
 shall know
 That memory is possession.

I.

When I remember something which I
 had,
 But which is gone, and I must do
 without,
 I sometimes wonder how I can be glad,
 Even in cowslip time when hedges
 sprout;
 It makes me sigh to think on it, — but
 yet
 My days will not be better days, should
 I forget.

II.

When I remember something promised
 me,
 But which I never had, nor can have
 now,
 Because the promiser we no more see
 In countries that accord with mortal
 vow;
 When I remember this, I mourn, —
 but yet
 My happier days are not the days when
 I forget.

LAMENTATION.

I READ upon that book,
 Which down the golden gulf doth let
 us look
 On the sweet days of pastoral majesty;
 I read upon that book

How, when the Shepherd Prince did
flee

(Red Esau's twin), he desolate took
The stone for a pillow: then he fell on
sleep.

And lo! there was a ladder. Lo!
there hung

A ladder from the star-place, and it
clung

To the earth: it tied her so to heaven;
and O!

There fluttered wings;
Then were ascending and descending
things

That stepped to him where he lay
low;

Then up the ladder would a-drifting go
(This feathered brood of heaven), and
show

Small as white flakes in winter that are
blown

Together, underneath the great white
throne.

When I had shut the book, I said:
"Now, as for me, my dreams upon my
bed

Are not like Jacob's dream;
Yet I have got it in my life; yes, I,
And many more: it doth not us be-
seem,

Therefore, to sigh.
Is there not hung a ladder in our sky?
Yea; and, moreover, all the way up
on high

Is thickly peopled with the prayers of
men.

We have no dream! What then?
Like winged wayfarers the height they
scale

(By Him that offers them they shall
prevail)—

The prayers of men.
But where is found a prayer for me;
How should I pray?

My heart is sick, and full of strife.
I heard one whisper with departing
breath,

"Suffer us not, for any pains of death,
To fall from Thee." [life!

But O, the pains of life! the pains of
There is no comfort now, and naught
to win,

But yet, — I will begin."

I.

"Preserve to me my wealth," I do not
say,

For that is wasted away;
And much of it was cankered ere it
went.

"Preserve to me my health," I cannot
say,

For that, upon a day,
Went after other delights to banish-
ment.

II.

What can I pray? "Give me forget-
fulness"?

No, I would still possess
Past away smiles, though present
fronts be stern.

"Give me again my kindred"? Nay;
not so,

Not idle prayers. We know
They that have crossed the river can-
not return.

III.

I do not pray, "Comfort me! comfort
me!"

For how should comfort be?
O—O that cooing mouth, — that little
white head!

No; but I pray, "If it be not too late,
Open to me the gate,
That I may find my babe when I am
dead.

IV.

"Show me the path. I had forgotten
Thee

When I was happy and free,
Walking down here in the gladsome
light o' the sun;

But now I come and mourn; O set my
feet

In the road to Thy blest seat,
And for the rest, O God, Thy will be
done."

DOMINION.

WHEN found the rose delight in her
fair hue?

Color is nothing to this world; 'tis I

That see it. Farther, I discover soul,
That trees are nothing to their fellow-
trees;

It is but I that love their stateliness,
And I that, comforting my heart, do
sit

At noon beneath their shadow. I will
step

On the ledges of this world, for it is
mine;

But the other world ye wot of shall go
too;

I will carry it in my bosom. O my
world,

That was not built with clay!

Consider it
(This outer world we tread on) as a
harp,—

A gracious instrument on whose fair
strings

We learn those airs we shall be set to
play

When mortal hours are ended. Let
the wings,

Man, of thy spirit move on it as wind,
And draw forth melody. Why shouldst
thou yet

Lie grovelling? More is won than e'er
was lost:

Inherit. Let thy day be to thy night
A teller of good tidings. Let thy
praise

Go up as birds go up that, when they
wake,

Shake off the dew and soar.

So take Joy home,
And make a place in thy great heart for
her,

And give her time to grow, and cherish
her;

Then will she come, and oft will sing
to thee,

When thou art working in the furrows;
ay,

Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.
It is a comely fashion to be glad,—

Joy is the grace we say to God.

There is a rest remaining. Art tired?
sinned? Hast thou

There is a Sacrifice. Lift up thy head,
The lovely world, and the over-world
alike,

Ring with a song eterne, a happy rede,
"THY FATHER LOVES THEE."

I.

Yon moored mackerel fleet
Hangs thick as a swarm of bees,
Or a clustering village street
Foundationless built on the seas.

II.

The mariners ply their craft,
Each set in his castle frail;
His care is all for the draught,
And he dries the rain-beaten sail.

III.

For rain came down in the night,
And thunder muttered full oft,
But now the azure is bright,
And hawks are wheeling aloft.

IV.

I take the land to my breast,
In her coat with daisies fine;
For me are the hills in their best,
And all that's made is mine.

V.

Sing high! "Though the red sun dip,
There yet is a day for me;
Nor youth I count for a ship
That long ago foundered at sea.

VI.

"Did the lost love die and depart?
Many times since we have met;
For I hold the years in my heart,
And all that was—is yet.

VII.

"I grant to the king his reign;
Let us yield him homage due;
But over the lands there are twain,
O king, I must rule as you.

VIII.

"I grant to the wise his meed,
But his yoke I will not brook,
For God taught me to read, —
He lent me the world for a book."

FRIENDSHIP.

ON A SUN-PORTRAIT OF HER HUSBAND,
SENT BY HIS WIFE TO THEIR FRIEND.

BEAUTIFUL eyes, — and shall I see no
more
The living thought when it would leap
from them,
And play in all its sweetness 'neath
their lids?

Here was a man familiar with fair
heights
That poets climb. Upon his peace the
tears
And troubles of our race deep inroads
made,
Yet life was sweet to him; he kept his
heart
At home. Who saw his wife might
well have thought —
"God loves this man. He chose a wife
for him —
The true one!" O sweet eyes, that
seem to live,
I know so much of you, tell me the
rest!
Eyes full of fatherhood and tender
care
For small, young children. Is a mes-
sage here
That you would fain have sent, but had
not time?
If such there be, I promise, by long
love
And perfect friendship, by all trust that
comes
Of understanding, that I will not fail,
No, nor delay to find it.

O, my heart
Will often pain me as for some strange
fault, —

Some grave defect in nature, — when I
think
How I, delighted, 'neath those olive-
trees,
Moved to the music of the tideless
main,
While, with sore weeping, in an island
home
They laid that much-loved head be-
neath the sod,
And I did not know.

I.

I stand on the bridge where last we
stood
When delicate leaves were young;
The children called us from yonder
wood,
While a mated blackbird sung.

II.

Ah, yet you call, — in your gladness
call, —
And I hear your pattering feet;
It does not matter, matter at all,
You fatherless children sweet, —

III.

It does not matter at all to you,
Young hearts that pleasure besets;
The father sleeps, but the world is new,
The child of his love forgets.

IV.

I too, it may be, before they drop,
The leaves that flicker to-day,
Ere bountiful gleams make ripe the
crop,
Shall pass from my place away:

V.

Ere yon gray cygnet puts on her white,
Or snow lies soft on the wold,
Shall shut these eyes on the lovely
light,
And leave the story untold.

VI.

Shall I tell it there? Ah, let that be,
 For the warm pulse beats so high;
 To love to-day, and to breathe and
 see, —
 To-morrow perhaps to die, —

VII.

Leave it with God. But this I have
 known,
 That sorrow is over soon;
 Some in dark nights, sore weeping
 alone,
 Forget by full of the moon.

VIII.

But if all loved, as the few can love,
 This world would seldom be well;
 And who need wish, if he dwells above,
 For a deep, a long death-knell.

IX.

There are four or five, who, passing
 this place,
 While they live will name me yet;
 And when I am gone will think on my
 face,
 And feel a kind of regret.

WINSTANLEY.

THE APOLOGY.

*Quoth the cedar to the reeds and
 rushes,
 "Water-grass, you know not what
 I do;
 Know not of my storms, nor of my
 hushes,
 And — I know not you."*

*Quoth the reeds and rushes, "Wind!
 O waken!
 Breathe, O wind, and set our an-
 swer free,
 For we have no voice, of you forsaken,
 For the cedar-tree."*

*Quoth the earth at midnight to the
 ocean,
 "Wilderness of water, lost to view,
 Naught you are to me but sounds of
 motion;
 I am naught to you."*

*Quoth the ocean, "Dawn! O fairest,
 clearest,
 Touch me with thy golden fingers
 bland;
 For I have no smile till thou appearest
 For the lovely land."*

*Quoth the hero dying, whelmed in
 glory,
 "Many blame me, few have under-
 stood;
 Ah, my folk, to you I leave a story, —
 Make its meaning good."*

*Quoth the folk, "Sing, poet! teach us,
 prove us;
 Surely we shall learn the meaning
 then;
 Wound us with a pain divine, O
 move us,
 For this man of men."*

WINSTANLEY'S deed, you kindly folk,
 With it I fill my lay,
 And a nobler man ne'er walked the
 world,
 Let his name be what it may.

The good ship "Snowdrop" tarried
 long,
 Up at the vane looked he;
 "Belike," he said, for the wind had
 dropped,
 "She lieth becalmed at sea."

The lovely ladies flocked within,
 And still would each one say,
 "Good mercer, be the ships come up?"
 But still he answered, "Nay."

Then stepped two mariners down the
 street,
 With looks of grief and fear:
 "Now, if Winstanley be your name,
 We bring you evil cheer!

"For the good ship 'Snowdrop' struck,
— she struck
On the rock, — the Eddystone,
And down she went with threescore
men,
We two being left alone.

"Down in the deep, with freight and
crew,
Past any help she lies,
And never a bale has come to shore
Of all thy merchandise."

"For cloth o' gold and comely frieze,"
Winstanley said, and sighed,
"For velvet coif, or costly coat,
They fathoms deep may bide.

"O thou brave skipper, blithe and
kind,
O mariners, bold and true,
Sorry at heart, right sorry am I,
A-thinking of yours and you.

"Many long days Winstanley's breast
Shall feel a weight within,
For a waft of wind he shall be 'feared
And trading count but sin.

"To him no more it shall be joy
To pace the cheerful town,
And see the lovely ladies gay
Step on in velvet gown."

The "Snowdrop" sank at Lammas
tide,
All under the yeasty spray;
On Christmas Eve the brig "Content"
Was also cast away.

He little thought o' New Year's night,
So jolly as he sat then,
While drank the toast and praised the
roast
The round-faced Aldermen, —

While serving-lads ran to and fro,
Pouring the ruby wine,
And jellies trembled on the board,
And towering pasties fine, —

While loud huzzas ran up the roof
Till the lamps did rock o'erhead,
And holly-boughs from rafters hung
Dropped down their berries red, —

He little thought on Plymouth Hoe,
With every rising tide,
How the wave washed in his sailor
lads,
And laid them side by side.

There stepped a stranger to the board:
"Now, stranger, who be ye?"
He looked to right, he looked to left,
And "Rest you merry," quoth he;

"For you did not see the brig go down,
Or ever a storm had blown;
For you did not see the white wave
rear
At the rock, — the Eddystone.

"She drave at the rock with sternsails
set;
Crash went the masts in twain;
She staggered back with her mortal
blow,
Then leaped at it again.

"There rose a great cry, bitter and
strong,
The misty moon looked out!
And the water swarmed with seamen's
heads,
And the wreck was strewed about.

"I saw her mainsail lash the sea
As I clung to the rock alone;
Then she heeled over, and down she
went,
And sank like any stone.

"She was a fair ship, but all's one!
For naught could bide the shock."
"I will take horse," Winstanley said,
"And see this deadly rock;

"For never again shall bark o'mine
Sail over the windy sea,
Unless, by the blessing of God, for this
Be found a remedy."

Winstanley rode to Plymouth town
 All in the sheet and the snow,
 And he looked around on shore and
 sound
 As he stood on Plymouth Hoe,

Till a pillar of spray rose far away,
 And shot up its stately head,
 Reared and fell over, and reared again :
 " 'Tis the rock! the rock!" he said.

Straight to the Mayor he took his way,
 " Good Master Mayor," quoth he,
 " I am a mercer of London town,
 And owner of vessels three, —

" But for your rock of dark renown,
 I had five to track the main."
 " You are one of many," the old Mayor
 said,
 " That on the rock complain.

" An ill rock, mercer! your words ring
 right,
 Well with my thoughts they chime,
 For my two sons to the world to come
 It sent before their time."

" Lend me a lighter, good Master
 Mayor,
 And a score of shipwrights free,
 For I think to raise a lantern tower
 On this rock o' destiny."

The old Mayor laughed, but sighed
 also;
 " Ah, youth," quoth he, " is rash ;
 Sooner, young man, thou'lt root it out
 From the sea that doth it lash.

" Who sails too near its jagged teeth,
 He shall have evil lot ;
 For the calmest seas that tumble there
 Froth like a boiling pot.

" And the heavier seas few look on
 nigh,
 But straight they lay him dead ;
 A seventy-gun-ship, sir! — they'll
 shoot
 Higher than her mast-head.

" O, beacons sighted in the dark,
 They are right welcome things,
 And pitchpots flaming on the shore
 Show fair as angel wings.

" Hast gold in hand? then light the
 land,
 It 'longs to thee and me ;
 But let alone the deadly rock
 In God Almighty's sea."

Yet said he, " Nay, — I must away,
 On the rock to set my feet ;
 My debts are paid, my will I made,
 Or ever I did thee greet.

" If I must die, then let me die
 By the rock and not elsewhere ;
 If I may live, O let me live
 To mount my lighthouse stair."

The old Mayor looked him in the face,
 And answered : " Have thy way ;
 Thy heart is stout, as if round about
 It was braced with an iron stay :

" Have thy will, mercer! choose thy
 men,
 * Put off from the storm-rid shore ;
 God with thee be, or I shall see
 Thy face and theirs no more."

Heavily plunged the breaking wave,
 And foam flew up the lea,
 Morning and even the drifted snow
 Fell into the dark gray sea.

Winstanley chose him men and gear ;
 He said, " My time I waste,"
 For the seas ran seething up the shore,
 And the wrack drave on in haste.

But twenty days he waited and more,
 Pacing the strand alone,
 Or ever he set his manly foot
 On the rock, — the Eddystone.

Then he and the sea began their strife,
 And worked with power and might :
 Whatever the man reared up by day
 The sea broke down by night.

He wrought at ebb with bar and beam,
 He sailed to shore at flow ;
 And at his side, by that same tide,
 Came bar and beam alsó.

"Give in, give in," the old Mayor cried,
 "Or thou wilt rue the day."
 "Yonder he goes," the townsfolk
 sighed,
 "But the rock will have its way.

"For all his looks that are so stout,
 And his speeches brave and fair,
 He may wait on the wind, wait on the
 wave,
 But he'll build no lighthouse there."

In fine weather and foul weather
 The rock his arts did flout,
 Through the long days and the short
 days,
 Till all that year ran out.

With fine weather and foul weather
 Another year came in :
 "To take his wage," the workmen said,
 "We almost count a sin."

Now March was gone, came April in,
 And a sea-fog settled down,
 And forth sailed he on a glassy sea,
 He sailed from Plymouth town.

With men and stores he put to sea,
 As he was wont to do ;
 They showed in the fog like ghosts full
 faint, —
 A ghostly craft and crew.

And the sea-fog lay and waxed away,
 For a long eight days and more ;
 "God help our men," quoth the women
 then ;
 "For they bide long from shore."

They paced the Hoe in doubt and
 dread :
 "Where may our mariners be ?"
 But the brooding fog lay soft as down
 Over the quiet sea.

A Scottish schooner made the port,
 The thirteenth day at e'en :
 "As I am a man," the captain cried,
 "A strange sight I have seen :

"And a strange sound heard, my mas-
 ters all,
 At sea, in the fog and the rain,
 Like shipwrights' hammers tapping
 low,
 Then loud, then low again.

"And a stately house one instant
 showed,
 Through a rift, on the vessel's lee ;
 What manner of creatures may be those
 That build upon the sea ?"

Then sighed the folk, "The Lord be
 praised !"
 And they flocked to the shore amain ;
 All over the Hoe, that livelong night,
 Many stood out in the rain.

It ceased, and the red sun reared his
 head,
 And the rolling fog did flee ;
 And, lo ! in the offing faint and far
 Winstanley's house at sea !

In fair weather with mirth and cheer
 The stately tower uprose ;
 In foul weather, with hunger and cold,
 They were content to close ;

Till up the stair Winstanley went,
 To fire the wick afar ;
 And Plymouth in the silent night
 Looked out, and saw her star.

Winstanley set his foot ashore :
 Said he, "My work is done ;
 I hold it strong to last as long
 As aught beneath the sun.

"But if it fail, as fail it may,
 Borne down with ruin and rout,
 Another than I shall rear it high,
 And brace the girders stout.

"A better than I shall rear it high,
 For now the way is plain,
 And though I were dead," Winstanley
 said,
 "The light would shine again.

"Yet, were I fain still to remain,
 Watch in my tower to keep,
 And tend my light in the stormiest
 night
 That ever did move the deep ;

"And if it stood, why, then 'twere
 good,
 Amid their tremulous stirs,
 To count each stroke, when the mad
 waves broke,
 For cheers of mariners.

"But if it fell, then this were well,
 That I should with it fall ;
 Since, for my part, I have built my
 heart
 In the courses of its wall.

"Ay ! I were fain, long to remain,
 Watch in my tower to keep,
 And tend my light in the stormiest
 night
 That ever did move the deep."

With that Winstanley went his way,
 And left the rock renowned,
 And summer and winter his pilot star
 Hung bright o'er Plymouth Sound.

But it fell out, fell out at last,
 That he would put to sea,
 To scan once more his lighthouse tower
 On the rock o' destiny.

And the winds broke, and the storm
 broke,
 And wrecks came plunging in ;
 None in the town that night lay down
 Or sleep or rest to win.

The great mad waves were rolling
 graves,
 And each flung up its dead ;
 The seething flow was white below,
 And black the sky o'erhead.

And when the dawn, the dull, gray
 dawn,
 Broke on the trembling town,
 And men looked south to the harbor
 mouth,
 The lighthouse tower was down, —

Down in the deep where he doth sleep
 Who made it shine afar,
 And then in the night that drowned its
 light,
 Set, with his pilot star.

*Many fair tombs in the glorious
 glooms
 At Westminster they show ;
 The brave and the great lie there in
 state :
 Winstanley lieth low.*

THE
MONITIONS OF THE UNSEEN,
AND
POEMS OF LOVE AND CHILDHOOD.

THE MONITIONS OF THE UNSEEN.

THE MONITIONS OF THE UNSEEN.

THERE are who give themselves to
work for men, —
To raise the lost, to gather orphaned
babes
And teach them, pitying of their mean
estate,
To feel for misery, and to look on
crime
With ruth, till they forget that they
themselves
Are of the race, themselves among the
crowd
Under the sentence and outside the
gate,
And of the family and in the doom.
Cold is the world; they feel how cold
it is,
And wish that they could warm it.
Hard is life
For some. They would that they could
soften it;
And, in the doing of their work, they
sigh
As if it was their choice and not their
lot;
And, in the raising of their prayer to
God,
They crave His kindness for the world
He made,
Till they, at last, forget that He, not
they,
Is the true lover of man.

Now, in an ancient town, that had
sunk low, —
Trade having drifted from it, while
there stayed
Too many, that it erst had fed, be-
hind, —
There walked a curate once, at early
day.

It was the summer-time; but summer
air
Came never, in its sweetness, down that
dark
And crowded alley, — never reached
the door
Whereat he stopped, — the sordid,
shattered door.

He paused, and, looking right and left,
beheld
Dirt and decay, the lowering tenements
That leaned toward each other; bro-
ken panes
Bulging with rags, and grim with old
neglect;
And reeking hills of formless refuse,
heaped
To fade and fester in a stagnant air.
But he thought nothing of it: he had
learned
To take all wretchedness for granted, —
he,
Reared in a stainless home, and radi-
ant yet
With the clear hues of healthful Eng-
lish youth,

Had learned to kneel by beds forlorn,
 and stoop
 Under foul lintels. He could touch,
 with hand
 Unshrinking, fevered fingers; he could
 hear
 The language of the lost, in haunt and
 den, —
 So dismal, that the coldest passer-by
 Must needs be sorry for them, and,
 albeit
 They cursed, would dare to speak no
 harder words
 Than these, — “God help them!”

Ay! a learned man

The curate in all woes that plague man-
 kind, —
 Too learned, for he was but young.
 His heart
 Had yearned till it was overstrained,
 and now
 He — plunged into a narrow slough
 unblest,
 Had struggled with its deadly waters,
 till
 His own head had gone under, and he
 took
 Small joy in work he could not look to
 aid
 Its cleansing.

Yet, by one right tender tie,
 Hope held him yet. The fathers coarse
 and dull,
 Vile mothers hard, and boys and girls
 profane,
 His soul drew back from. He had
 worked for them, —
 Work without joy: but, in his heart of
 hearts,
 He loved the little children; and,
 where'er
 He heard their prattle innocent, and
 heard
 Their tender voices lisping sacred
 words
 That he had taught them, — in the
 cleanly calm
 Of decent school, by decent matron
 held, —
 Then would he say, “I shall have
 pleasure yet,
 In these.”

But now, when he pushed back that
 door,
 And mounted up a flight of ruined
 stairs,
 He said not that. He said, “Oh!
 once I thought
 The little children would make bright
 for me
 The crown they wear who have won
 many souls
 For righteousness; but oh, this evil
 place!
 Hard lines it gives them, cold and dirt
 abhorred, —
 Hunger and nakedness, in lieu of love,
 And blows instead of care.

And so they die,

The little children that I love, — they
 die, —
 They turn their wistful faces to the
 wall,
 And slip away to God.”

With that, his hand

He laid upon a latch and lifted it,
 Looked in full quietly, and entered
 straight.

What saw he there? He saw a three-
 years child,
 That lay a-dying on a wisp of straw
 Swept up into a corner. O'er its brow
 The damps of death were gathering:
 all alone,
 Uncared for, save that by its side was
 set
 A cup, it waited. And the eyes had
 ceased
 To look on things at hand. He thought
 they gazed
 In wistful wonder, or some faint sur-
 mise
 Of coming change, — as though they
 saw the gate
 Of that fair land that seems to most of
 us
 Very far off.

When he beheld the look,

He said, “I knew, I knew how this
 would be!
 Another! Ay, and but for drunken
 blows

And dull forgetfulness of infant need,
This little one had lived." And there-
upon

The misery of it wrought upon him so,
That, unaware, he wept. Oh! then it
was

That, in the bending of his manly
head,

It came between the child and that
whereon

He gazed, and, when the curate glanced
again,

Those dying eyes, drawn back to earth
once more,

Looked up into his own, and smiled.

He drew

More near, and kneeled beside the
small frail thing,

Because the lips were moving; and it
raised

Its baby hand, and stroked away his
tears,

And whispered, "Master! master!"
and so died.

Now, in that town there was an ancient
church,

A minster of old days which these had
turned

To parish uses: there the curate served.
It stood within a quiet swarded Close,
Sunny and still, and, though it was not
far

From those dark courts where poor
humanity

Struggled and swarmed, it seemed to
wear its own

Still atmosphere about it, and to hold
That old-world calm within its pre-
cincts pure

And that grave rest which modern life
foregoes.

When the sad curate, rising from his
knees,

Looked from the dead to heaven, —
as, unaware,

Men do when they would track de-
parted life, —

He heard the deep tone of the minster-
bell

Sounding for service, and he turned
away

So heavy at heart, that, when he left
behind

That dismal habitation, and came out
In the clear sunshine of the minster-
yard,

He never marked it. Up the aisle he
moved,

With his own gloom about him; then
came forth,

And read before the folk grand words
and calm, —

Words full of hope; but into his dull
heart

Hope came not. As one talketh in a
dream,

And doth not mark the sense of his
own words,

He read; and, as one walketh in a
dream,

He after walked toward the vestment-
room,

And never marked the way he went by,
— no,

Nor the gray verger that before him
stood,

The great church-keys depending from
his hand,

Ready to follow him out and lock the
door.

At length, aroused to present things,
but not

Content to break the sequence of his
thought,

Nor ready for the working day that
held

Its busy course without, he said,
"Good friend,

Leave me the keys: I would remain
awhile."

And, when the verger gave, he moved
with him

Toward the door distraught, then shut
him out,

And locked himself within the church
alone.

The minster-church was like a great
brown cave,

Fluted and fine with pillars, and all
dim

With glorious gloom; but, as the
curate turned,

Suddenly shone the sun, — and roof
and walls,

Also the clustering shafts from end to end,
 Were thickly sown all over, as it were,
 With seedling rainbows. And it went
 and came
 And went, that sunny beam, and
 drifted up
 Ethereal bloom to flush the open wings
 And carven cheeks of dimpled cheru-
 bim,
 And dropped upon the curate as he
 passed,
 And covered his white raiment and his
 hair.

Then did look down upon him from
 their place,
 High in the upper lights, grave mitred
 priests,
 And grand old monarchs in their
 flowered gowns
 And capes of miniver; and therewithal
 (A veiling cloud gone by) the naked
 sun
 Smote with his burning splendor all
 the pile,
 And in there rushed, through half-
 translucent panes,
 A sombre glory as of rusted gold,
 Deep ruby stains, and tender blue and
 green,
 That made the floor a beauty and de-
 light,
 Strewed as with phantom blossoms,
 sweet enough
 To have been wafted there the day
 they dropt
 On the flower-beds in heaven.

The curate passed
 Adown the long south aisle, and did
 not think
 Upon this beauty, nor that he him-
 self —
 Excellent in the strength of youth, and
 fair
 With all the majesty that noble work
 And stainless manners give — did add
 his part
 To make it fairer.

In among the knights
 That lay with hands uplifted, by the
 lute

And palm of many a saint, — 'neath
 capitals
 Whereon our fathers had been bold to
 carve
 With earthly tools their ancient child-
 like dream
 Concerning heavenly fruit and living
 bowers,
 And glad full-throated birds that sing
 up there
 Among the branches of the tree of
 life, —
 Through all the ordered forest of the
 shafts,
 Shooting on high to enter into light,
 That swam aloft, — he took his silent
 way,
 And in the southern transept sat him
 down,
 Covered his face, and thought.

He said, "No pain,
 No passion, and no aching, heart o'
 mine,
 Doth stir within thee. Oh! I would
 there did:
 Thou art so dull, so tired. I have lost
 I know not what. I see the heavens
 as lead:
 They tend no whither. Ah! the
 world is bared
 Of her enchantment now: she is but
 earth
 And water. And, though much hath
 passed away,
 There may be more to go. I may for-
 get
 The joy and fear that have been:
 there may live
 No more for me the fervency of hope
 Nor the arrest of wonder.

"Once I said,
 'Content will wait on work, though
 work appear
 Unfruitful.' Now I say, 'Where is
 the good?
 What is the good?' A lamp when it
 is lit
 Must needs give light; but I am like a
 man
 Holding his lamp in some deserted
 place

Where no foot passeth. Must I trim
 my lamp,
 And ever painfully toil to keep it bright,
 When use for it is none? I must; I
 will.
 Though God withhold my wages, I
 must work,
 And watch the bringing of my work to
 nought, —
 Weed in the vineyard through the heat
 o' the day,
 And, overtasked, behold the weedy
 place
 Grow ranker yet in spite of me.

“Oh! yet
 My meditated words are trodden down
 Like a little wayside grass. Castaway
 shells,
 Lifted and tossed aside by a plunging
 wave,
 Have no more force against it than
 have I
 Against the sweeping, weltering wave
 of life,
 That, lifting and dislodging me, drives
 on,
 And notes not mine endeavor.”

Afterward,
 He added more words like to these; to
 wit,
 That it was hard to see the world so
 sad:
 He would that it were happier. It was
 hard
 To see the blameless overborne; and
 hard
 To know that God, who loves the world,
 should yet
 Let it lie down in sorrow, when a smile
 From Him would make it laugh and
 sing, — a word
 From Him transform it to a heaven.
 He said,
 Moreover, “When will this be done?
 My life
 Hath not yet reached the noon, and I
 am tired;
 And oh! it may be that, uncomforted
 By foolish hope of doing good and vain
 Conceit of being useful, I may live,
 And it may be my duty to go on

Working for years and years, for years
 and years.”
 But, while the words were uttered, in
 his heart
 There dawned a vague alarm. He was
 aware
 That somewhat touched him, and he
 lifted up
 His face. “I am alone,” the curate
 said, —
 “I think I am alone. What is it,
 then?
 I am ashamed! My raiment is not
 clean.
 My lips, — I am afraid they are not
 clean.
 My heart is darkened and unclean.
 Ah me,
 To be a man, and yet to tremble so!
 Strange, strange!”

And there was sitting at his feet —
 He could not see it plainly — at his
 feet
 A very little child. And, while the
 blood
 Drave to his heart, he set his eye on it,
 Gazing, and, lo! the loveliness from
 heaven
 Took clearer form and color. He be-
 held
 The strange, wise sweetness of a dim-
 pled mouth, —
 The deep serene of eyes at home with
 bliss,
 And perfect in possession. So it spoke,
 “My master!” but he answered not a
 word;
 And it went on: “I had a name, a
 name.
 He knew my name; but here they can
 forget.”
 The curate answered: “Nay, I know
 thee well.
 I love thee. Wherefore art thou
 come?” It said,
 “They sent me;” and he faltered,
 “Fold thy hand,
 O most dear little one! for on it gleams
 A gem that is so bright I cannot look
 Thereon.” It said, “When I did
 leave this world,
 That was a tear. But that was long
 ago;

For I have lived among the happy folk,
You wot of, ages, ages." Then said
he,

"Do they forget us, while beneath the
palms
They take their infinite leisure?" And,
with eyes

That seemed to muse upon him, look-
ing up

In peace the little child made answer,
"Nay;"

And murmured, in the language that he
loved,

"How is it that his hair is not yet
white;

For I and all the others have been long
Waiting for him to come."

"And was it long?"

The curate answered, pondering.

"Time being done,
Shall life indeed expand, and give the
sense,

In our to-come, of infinite extension?"

Then said the child, "In heaven we
children talk

Of the great matters, and our lips are
wise;

But here I can but talk with thee in
words

That here I knew." And therewithal,
arisen,

It said, "I pray you take me in your
arms."

Then, being afraid but willing, so he
did;

And partly drew about the radiant
child,

For better covering its dread purity,
The foldings of his gown. And he be-
held

Its beauty, and the tremulous woven
light

That hung upon its hair; withal, the
robe,

'Whiter than fuller of this world can
white,'

That clothed its immortality. And so
The trembling came again, and he was

dumb,
Repenting his uncleanness: and he
lift

His eyes, and all the holy place was
full

Of living things; and some were faint
and dim,

As if they bore an intermittent life,
Waxing and waning; and they had no
form,

But drifted on like slowly trailed clouds,
Or moving spots of darkness, with an
eye

Apiece. And some, in guise of evil
birds,

Came by in troops, and stretched their
naked necks,

And some were men-like, but their
heads hung down;

And he said, "O my God! let me find
grace

Not to behold their faces, for I know
They must be wicked and right terri-
ble."

But while he prayed, lo! whispers; and
there moved

Two shadows on the wall. He could
not see

The forms of them that cast them: he
could see

Only the shadows as of two that sat
Upon the floor, where, clad in women's

weeds,
They lisped together. And he shud-
dered much:

There was a rustling near him, and he
feared

Lest they should touch him, and he feel
their touch.

"It is not great," quoth one, "the
work achieved.

We do, and we delight to do, our
best:

But that is little; for, my dear," quoth
she,

"This tower and town have been in-
fested long

With angels." — "Ay," the other made
reply,

"I had a little evil one, of late,
That I picked up as it was crawling

out
O' the pit, and took and cherished in
my breast.

It would divine for me, and oft would
moan,

'Pray thee, no churches,' and it spake
of this.

But I was harried once, — thou know'st
 by whom, —
 And fled in here; and, when he followed me,
 I crouching by this pillar, he let
 down
 His hand, — being all too proud to send
 his eyes
 In its wake, — and, plucking forth my
 tender imp,
 Flung it behind him. It went yelping
 forth;
 And, as for me, I never saw it more.
 Much is against us, — very much: the
 times
 Are hard." She paused: her fellow
 took the word,
 Plaining on such as preach and them
 that plead.
 "Even such as haunt the yawning
 mouths of hell,"
 Quoth she, "and pluck them back that
 run thereto."
 Then, like a sudden blow, there fell on
 him
 The utterance of his name. "There is
 no soul
 That I loathe more, and oftener curse.
 Woe's me,
 That cursing should be vain! Ay, he
 will go
 Gather the sucking children, that are
 yet
 Too young for us, and watch and shelter
 them
 Till the strong Angels — pitiless and
 stern,
 But to them loving ever — sweep them
 in,
 By armsful, to the unapproachable fold.

"We strew his path with gold: it will
 not lie.
 'Deal softly with him,' was the master's word.
 We brought him all delights: his angel
 came
 And stood between them and his eyes.
 They spend
 Much pains upon him, — keep him
 poor and low
 And unbeloved; and thus he gives his
 mind

To fill the fateful, the impregnable
 Child-fold, and sow on earth the seed
 of stars.

"Oh! hard is serving against love, —
 the love
 Of the Unspeakable; for if we soil
 The souls He openeth out a washing-
 place;
 And if we grudge, and snatch away the
 bread,
 Then will He save by poverty, and
 gain
 By early giving up of blameless life;
 And if we shed out gold, He even will
 save
 In spite of gold, — of twice-refined
 gold."

With that the curate set his daunted
 eyes
 To look upon the shadows of the fiends.
 He was made sure they could not see
 the child
 That nestled in his arms; he also knew
 They were unconscious that his mortal
 ears
 Had new intelligence, which gave their
 speech
 Possible entrance through his garb of
 clay.

He was afraid, yet awful gladness
 reached
 His soul: the testimony of the lost
 Upbraided him; but while he trembled
 yet,
 The heavenly child had lifted up its
 head
 And left his arms, and on the marble
 floor
 Stood beckoning.

And, its touch withdrawn, the place
 Was silent, empty; all that swarming
 tribe
 Of evil ones concealed behind the veil,
 And shut into their separate world,
 were closed
 From his observance. He arose, and
 paced
 After the little child, — as half in fear
 That it would leave him, — till they
 reached a door;

And then said he, — but much dis-
 traught he spoke,
 Laying his hand across the lock, —
 "This door
 Shuts in the stairs whereby men mount
 the tower.
 Wouldst thou go up, and so withdraw
 to heaven?"
 It answered, "I will mount them."
 Then said he,
 "And I will follow." — "So thou shalt
 do well,"
 The radiant thing replied, and it went
 up,
 And he, amazed, went after; for the
 stairs,
 Otherwhile dark, were lightened by the
 rays
 Shed out of raiment woven in high
 heaven,
 And hair whereon had smiled the light
 of God.

With that, they, pacing on, came out
 at last
 Into a dim, weird place, — a chamber
 formed
 Betwixt the roofs: for you shall know
 that all
 The vaulting of the nave, fretted and
 fine,
 Was covered with the dust of ages,
 laid
 Thick with those chips of stone which
 they had left
 Who wrought it; but a high-pitched
 roof was reared
 Above it, and the western gable pierced
 With three long narrow lights. Great
 tie-beams loomed
 Across, and many daws frequented
 there,
 The starling and the sparrow littered
 it
 With straw, and peeped from many a
 shady nook;
 And there was lifting up of wings, and
 there
 Was hasty exit when the curate came.
 But sitting on a beam and moving not
 For him, he saw two fair gray turtle-
 doves
 Bowing their heads, and cooing; and
 the child

Put forth a hand to touch his own, but
 straight
 He, startled, drew it back, because,
 forsooth,
 A stirring fancy smote him, and he
 thought
 That language trembled on their inno-
 cent tongues,
 And floated forth in speech that man
 could hear.
 Then said the child, "Yet touch, my
 master dear."
 And he let down his hand, and touched
 again;
 And so it was. "But if they had their
 way,"
 One turtle cooed, "how should this
 world go on?"

Then he looked well upon them, as he
 stood
 Upright before them. They were
 feathered doves,
 And sitting close together; and their
 eyes
 Were rounded with the rim that marks
 their kind.
 Their tender crimson feet did pat the
 beam, —
 No phantoms they; and soon the fel-
 low-dove
 Made answer, "Nay, they count them-
 selves so wise,
 There is no task they shall be set to do
 But they will ask God why. What
 mean they so?"
 The glory is not in the task, but in
 The doing it for Him. What should
 he think,
 Brother, this man that must, forsooth,
 be set
 Such noble work, and suffered to be-
 hold
 Its fruit, if he knew more of us and
 ours?"
 With that the other leaned, as if attent:
 "I am not perfect, brother, in his
 thought."
 The mystic bird replied, "Brother, he
 saith,
 'But it is nought: the work is over-
 hard.'
 Whose fault is that? God sets not
 overwork.

He saith the world is sorrowful, and he
 Is therefore sorrowful. He cannot
 set
 The crooked straight; — but who de-
 mands of him,
 O brother, that he should? What!
 thinks he, then,
 His work is God's advantage, and his
 will
 More bent to aid the world than its
 dread Lord's.
 Nay, yet there live amongst us legions
 fair,
 Millions on millions, who could do
 right well
 What he must fail in; and 'twas whis-
 pered me,
 That chiefly for himself the task is
 given, —
 His little daily task." With that he
 paused.

Then said the other, preening its fair
 wing,
 "Men have discovered all God's is-
 lands now,
 And given them names; whereof they
 are as proud,
 And deem themselves as great, as if
 their hands
 Had made them. Strange is man,
 and strange his pride.
 Now, as for us, it matters not to learn
 What and from whence we be: How
 should we tell?
 Our world is undiscovered in these
 skies,
 Our names not whispered. Yet, for
 us and ours,
 What joy it is, — permission to come
 down,
 Not souls, as he, to the bosom of their
 God,
 To guide, but to their goal the winged
 fowls,
 His lovely lower-fashioned lives to
 help
 To take their forms by legions, fly, and
 draw
 With us the sweet, obedient, flocking
 things
 That ever hear our message reverently,
 And follow us far. How should they
 know their way,

Forsooth, alone? Men say they fly
 alone;
 Yet some have set on record, and
 averred,
 That they, among the flocks, had duly
 marked
 A leader."

Then his fellow made reply:
 "They might divine the Maker's heart.
 Come forth,
 Fair dove, to find the flocks, and guide
 their wings,
 For Him that loveth them."

With that, the child
 Withdrew his hand, and all their
 speech was done.
 He moved toward them, but they
 fluttered forth
 And fled into the sunshine.

"I would fain,"
 Said he, "have heard some more.
 And wilt thou go?"
 He added to the child, for this had
 turned.
 "Ay," quoth he, gently, "to the beg-
 gar's place;
 For I would see the beggar in the
 porch."

So they went down together to the
 door,
 Which, when the curate opened, lo!
 without
 The beggar sat; and he saluted him:
 "Good morrow, master." "Where-
 fore art thou here?"
 The curate asked: "it is not service-
 time,
 And none will enter now to give thee
 alms."
 Then said the beggar, "I have hope
 at heart
 That I shall go to my poor house no
 more."
 "Art thou so sick that thou dost think
 to die?"
 The curate said. With that the beggar
 laughed,
 And under his dim eyelids gathered
 tears,

And he was all a-tremble with a strange
 And moving exaltation. "Ay," quoth
 he,
 And set his face toward high heaven:
 "I think
 The blessing that I wait on must be
 near."
 Then said the curate, "God be good to
 thee."
 And, straight, the little child put forth
 his hand,
 And touched him. "Master, master,
 hush!
 You should not, master, speak so care-
 lessly
 In this great presence."

But the touch so wrought,
 That, lo! the dazzled curate staggered
 back,
 For dread effulgence from the beggar's
 eyes
 Smote him, and from the crippled
 limbs shot forth
 Terrible lights, as pure long blades of
 fire.
 "Withdraw thy touch! withdraw thy
 touch!" he cried,
 "Or else shall I be blinded." Then
 the child
 Stood back from him; and he sat down
 apart,
 Recovering of his manhood: and he
 heard
 The beggar and the child discourse of
 things
 Dreadful for glory, till his spirits came
 Anew; and, when the beggar looked
 on him,
 He said, "If I offend not, pray you tell
 Who and what are you, — I behold
 a face
 Marred with old age, sickness, and
 poverty, —
 A cripple with a staff, who long hath
 sat
 Begging, and oftentimes moaning, in the
 porch,
 For pain and for the wind's inclemency.
 What are you?" Then the beggar
 made reply,
 "I was a delegate, a living power;
 My work was bliss, for seeds were in
 my hand

To plant a new-made world. O happy
 work!
 It grew and blossomed; but my dwell-
 ing-place
 Was far remote from heaven. I have
 not seen;
 I knew no wish to enter there. But,
 lo!
 There went forth rumors, running out
 like rays,
 How some, that were of power like
 even to mine,
 Had made request to come and find a
 place
 Within its walls. And these were
 satisfied
 With promises, and sent to this far
 world
 To take the weeds of your mortality,
 And minister, and suffer grief and pain,
 And die like men. Then were they
 gathered in.
 They saw a face, and were accounted
 kin
 To Whom thou knowest, for He is kin
 to men.

"Then I did wait; and oft, at work, I
 sang,
 'To minister! oh, joy, to minister!'
 And, it being known, a message came
 to me:
 'Whether is best, thou forest-planter
 wise,
 To minister to others, or that they
 Should minister to thee?' Then, on
 my face
 Low lying, I made answer: 'It is best,
 Most High, to minister;' and thus
 came back
 The answer, — 'Choose not for thyself
 the best:
 Go down, and, lo! my poor shall minis-
 ter,
 Out of their poverty, to thee; shall
 learn
 Compassion by thy frailty; and shall
 oft
 Turn back, when speeding home from
 work, to help
 Thee, weak and crippled, home.* My
 little ones,
 Thou shalt importune for their slender
 mite,

And pray, and move them that they
 give it up
 For love of Me.”

The curate answered him,
 “Art thou content, O great one from
 afar!

If I may ask, and not offend?” He
 said,

“I am. Behold! I stand not all alone,
 That I should think to do a perfect
 work.

I may not wish to give; for I have
 heard

’Tis best for me that I receive. For
 me,

God is the only giver, and His gift
 Is one.” With that, the little child
 sighed out,

“O master! master! I am out of
 heaven

Since noonday, and I hear them calling
 me.

If you be ready, great one, let us go:—
 Hark! hark! they call.”

Then did the beggar lift
 His face to heaven, and utter forth a
 cry

As of the pangs of death, and every
 tree

Moved as if shaken by a sudden
 wind.

He cried again, and there came forth a
 hand

From some invisible form, which, being
 laid

A little moment on the curate’s eyes,
 It dazzled him with light that brake
 from it,

So that he saw no more.

“What shall I do?”
 The curate murmured, when he came
 again

To himself and looked about him.
 “This is strange!

My thoughts are all astray; and yet,
 methinks,

A weight is taken from my heart. Lo!
 lo!

There lieth at my feet, frail, white, and
 dead,

The sometime beggar. He is happy
 now.

There was a child; but he is gone, and
 he

Is also happy. I am glad to think
 I am not bound to make the wrong go
 right;

But only to discover, and to do,
 With cheerful heart, the work that God
 appoints.”

With that, he did compose, with rever-
 ent care,

The dead; continuing, “I will trust in
 Him,

THAT HE CAN HOLD HIS OWN; and I
 will take

His will, above the work He sendeth
 me,

To be my chiefest good.”

Then went he forth,
 “I shall die early,” thinking: “I am
 warned,

By this fair vision, that I have not
 long

To live.” Yet he lived on to good old
 age;—

Ay, he lives yet, and he is working
 still.

It may be there are many in like case:
 They give themselves, and are in misery
 Because the gift is small, and doth not
 make

The world by so much better as they
 fain

Would have it. ’Tis a fault; but, as
 for us,

Let us not blame them. Maybe, ’tis a
 fault

More kindly looked on by The Majesty
 Than our best virtues are. Why, what
 are we!

What have we given, and what have we
 desired

To give, the world?

There must be something wrong.
 Look to it: let us mend our ways.
 Farewell.

A BIRTHDAY WALK.

(WRITTEN FOR A FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY.)

—

"The days of our life are threescore
years and ten."

—

A BIRTHDAY:—and now a day that
rose
With much of hope, with meaning
rife—
A thoughtful day from dawn to close :
The middle day of human life.

In sloping fields on narrow plains,
The sheep were feeding on their
knees,
As we went through the winding lanes,
Strewed with red buds of alder-trees.

So warm the day—its influence lent
To flagging thought a stronger wing ;
So utterly was winter spent,
So sudden was the birth of spring.

Wild crocus flowers in copse and
hedge—
In sunlight, clustering thick below,
Sighed for the firwood's shaded ledge,
Where sparkled yet a line of snow.

And crowded snowdrops faintly hung
Their fair heads lower for the heat,
While in still air all branches flung
Their shadowy doubles at our feet.

And through the hedge the sunbeams
crept,
Dropped through the maple and the
birch ;
And lost in airy distance slept
On the broad tower of Tamworth
Church.

Then, lingering on the downward way,
A little space we resting stood,
To watch the golden haze that lay
Adown that river by the wood.

A distance vague, the bloom of sleep
The constant sun had lent the scene,
A veiling charm on dingles deep
Lay soft those pastoral hills between.

There are some days that die not out,
Nor alter by reflection's power,
Whose converse calm, whose words
devout,
For ever rest, the spirit's dower.

And they are days when drops a veil—
A mist upon the distance past ;
And while we say to peace—"All
hail!"
We hope that always it shall last.

Times when the troubles of the heart
Are hushed—as winds were hushed
that day—
And budding hopes begin to start,
Like those green hedgerows on our
way :

When all within and all around,
Like hues on that sweet landscape
blend,
And Nature's hand has made to sound
The heartstrings that her touch at-
tend :

When there are rays within, like those
That streamed through maple and
through birch,
And rested in such calm repose
On the broad tower of Tamworth
Church.



NOT IN VAIN I WAITED.

SHE was but a child, a child,
And I a man grown ;
Sweet she was, and fresh, and wild,
And, I thought, my own.
What could I do? The long grass
groweth,
The long wave floweth with a mur-
mur on :
The why and the wherefore of it all
who knoweth?
Ere I thought to lose her she was
grown—and gone.

This day or that day in warm spring
 weather,
 The lamb that was tame will yearn to
 break its tether.
 "But if the world wound thee," I said,
 "come back to me,
 Down in the dell wishing — wishing,
 wishing for thee."

The dews hang on the white may,
 Like a ghost it stands,
 All in the dusk before day
 That folds the dim lands:
 Dark fell the skies when once belated,
 Sad, and sorrow-fated, I missed the
 sun;
 But wake, heart, and sing, for not in
 vain I waited.
 O clear, O solemn dawning, lo, the
 maid is won!
 Sweet dews, dry early on the grass and
 clover,
 Lest the bride wet her feet while she
 walks over;
 Shine to-day, sunbeams, and make all
 fair to see:
 Down the dell she's coming — coming,
 coming with me.

A GLEANING SONG.

"WHITHER away, thou little careless
 rover?

(Kind Roger's true)

Whither away, across yon bents and
 clover,

Wet, wet with dew?"

"Roger here, Roger there —

Roger — O, he sighed,

Yet let me glean among the wheat,
 Nor sit kind Roger's bride."

"What wilt thou do when all the
 gleanings ended,

What wilt thou do?

The cold will come, and fog and frost-
 work blended

(Kind Roger's true)."

"Sleet and rain, cloud and storm,

When they cease to frown

I'll bind me primrose bunches sweet,
 And cry them up the town."

"What if at last thy careless heart
 awaking

This day thou rue?"

"I'll cry my flowers, and think for all
 its breaking,

Kind Roger's true;

Roger here, Roger there,

O, my true love sighed,

Sigh once, once more, I'll stay my
 feet

And rest kind Roger's bride."

WITH A DIAMOND.

WHILE Time a grim old lion gnawing
 lay,

And mumbled with his teeth yon
 regal tomb,

Like some immortal tear undimmed
 for aye,

This gem was dropped among the
 dust of doom.

Dropped, haply, by a sad, forgotten
 queen,

A tear to outlast name, and fame,
 and tongue:

Her other tears, and ours, all tears
 terrene,

For great new griefs to be hereafter
 sung.

Take it, — a goddess might have wept
 such tears,

Or Dame Electra changed into a
 star,

That waxed so dim because her chil-
 dren's years

In leagured Troy were bitter through
 long war.

Not till the end to end to grow dull or
 waste, —

Ah, what a little while the light we
 share!

Hand after hand shall yet with this be
 graced,

Signing the Will that leaves it to an
 heir.

FANCY.

O FANCY, if thou flyest, come back anon,
 Thy fluttering wings are soft as love's first word,
 And fragrant as the feathers of that bird,
 Which feeds upon the budded cinnamon
 I ask thee not to work, or sigh — play on,
 From nought that was not, was, or is, deterred;
 The flax that Old Fate spun thy flights have stirred,
 And waved memorial grass of Marathon.
 Play, but be gentle, not as on that day
 I saw thee running down the rims of doom
 With stars thou hadst been stealing — while they lay
 Smothered in light and blue — clasped to thy breast;
 Bring rather to me in the firelit room
 A netted halcyon bird to sing of rest.

COMPENSATION.

ONE launched a ship, but she was wrecked at sea;
 He built a bridge, but floods have borne it down;
 He meant much good, none came: strange destiny,
 His corn lies sunk, his bridge bears none to town,
 Yet good he had not meant became his crown;
 For once at work, when even as nature free,
 From thought of good he was, or of renown,
 God took the work for good and let good be.
 So wakened with a trembling after sleep,
 Dread Mona Roa yields her fateful store;
 All gleaming hot the scarlet rivers creep,

And fanned of great-leaved palms slip to the shore,
 Then stolen to unplumbed wastes of that far deep,
 Lay the foundations for one island more.

LOOKING DOWN.

MOUNTAINS of sorrow, I have heard your moans,
 And the moving of your pines; but we sit high
 On your green shoulders, nearer stoops the sky,
 And pure airs visit us from all the zones.
 Sweet world beneath, too happy far to sigh,
 Dost thou look thus beheld from heavenly thrones?
 No; not for all the love that counts thy stones,
 While sleepy with great light the valleys lie.
 Strange, rapturous peace! its sunshine doth enfold
 My heart; I have escaped to the days divine,
 It seemeth as bygone ages back had rolled,
 And all the eldest past was now, was mine;
 Nay, even as if Melchizedec of old
 Might here come forth to us with bread and wine.

MARRIED LOVERS.

COME away, the clouds are high,
 Put the flashing needles by.
 Many days are not to spare,
 Or to waste, my fairest fair!
 All is ready. Come to-day,
 For the nightingale her lay,
 When she findeth that the whole
 Of her love, and all her soul,
 Cannot forth of her sweet throat,
 Sobs the while she draws her breath,
 And the bravery of her note
 In a few days altereth.

Come, ere she despond, and see
 In a silent ecstasy
 Chestnuts heave for hours and hours
 All the glory of their flowers
 To the melting blue above,
 That broods over them like love.
 Leave the garden walls, where blow
 Apple-blossoms pink, and low
 Ordered beds of tulips fine.
 Seek the blossoms made divine
 With a scent that is their soul.
 These are soulless. Bring the white
 Of thy gown to bathe in light
 Walls for narrow hearts. The whole
 Earth is found, and air and sea,
 Not too wide for thee and me.

Not too wide, and yet thy face
 Gives the meaning of all space,
 And thine eyes, with starbeams fraught,
 Hold the measure of all thought;
 For of them my soul besought,
 And was shown a glimpse of thine —
 A veiled vestal, with divine
 Solace, in sweet love's despair,
 For that life is brief as fair.
 Who hath most, he yearneth most,
 Sure, as seldom heretofore,
 Somewhere of the gracious more.
 Deepest joy the least shall boast,
 Asking with new-opened eyes
 The remainder; that which lies
 O, so fair! but not all conned —
 O, so near! and yet beyond.

Come, and in the woodland sit,
 Seem a wonted part of it.
 Then, while moves the delicate air,
 And the glories of thy hair
 Little flickering sun-rays strike,
 Let me see what thou art like;
 For great love enthalls me so,
 That, in sooth, I scarcely know.
 Show me, in a house all green,
 Save for long gold wedges' sheen,
 Where the flies, white sparks of fire,
 Dart and hover and aspire,
 And the leaves, air-stirred on high,
 Feel such joy they needs must sigh,
 And the untracked grass makes sweet
 All fair flowers to touch thy feet,
 And the bees about them hum.
 All the world is waiting. Come!

A WINTER SONG.

CAME the dread Archer up yonder
 lawn —
 Night is the time for the old to die —
 But woe for an arrow that smote the
 fawn,
 When the hind that was sick un-
 scathed went by.

Father lay moaning, "Her fault was
 sore
 (Night is the time when the old
 must die),
 Yet, ah to bless her, my child, once
 more,
 For heart is failing: the end is
 nigh."

"Daughter, my daughter, my girl," I
 cried
 (Night is the time for the old to die),
 "Woe for the wish if till morn ye
 bide" —
 Dark was the welkin and wild the
 sky.

Heavily plunged from the roof the
 snow —
 (Night is the time when the old will
 die),
 She answered, "My mother, 'tis well,
 I go."
 Sparkled the north star, the wrack
 flew high.

First at his head, and last at his feet
 (Night is the time when the old
 should die),
 Kneeling I watched till his soul did
 fleet,
 None else that loved him, none else
 were nigh.

I wept in the night as the desolate
 weep
 (Night is the time for the old to die),
 Cometh my daughter? the drifts are
 deep,
 Across the cold hollows how white
 they lie.

I sought her afar through the spectral
trees
(Night is the time when the old must
die),
The fells were all muffled, the floods
did freeze,
And a wrathful moon hung red in
the sky.

By night I found her where pent
waves steal
(Night is the time when the old should
die),
But she lay stiff by the locked mill-
wheel,
And the old stars lived in their homes
on high.



BINDING SHEAVES.

HARK! a lover binding sheaves
To his maiden sings,
Flutter, flutter go the leaves,
Larks drop their wings.
Little brooks for all their mirth
Are not blythe as he.
"Give me what the love is worth
That I give thee.

"Speech that cannot be forborne
Tells the story through:
I sowed my love in with the corn,
And they both grew.
Count the world full wide of girth,
And hived honey sweet,
But count the love of more worth
Laid at thy feet.

"Money's worth is house and land,
Velvet coat and vest.
Work's worth is bread in hand,
Ay, and sweet rest.
Wilt thou learn what love is worth?
Ah! she sits above,
Sighing, 'Weigh me not with earth,
Love's worth is love.'"

WORK.

LIKE coral insects multitudinous
The minutes are whereof our life is
made.
They build it up as in the deep's blue
shade
It grows, it comes to light, and then,
and thus
For both there is an end. The popu-
lous
Sea-blossoms close, our minutes that
have paid
Life's debt of work are spent; the
work is laid
Before our feet that shall come after us.
We may not stay to watch if it will
speed,
The bard if on some luter's string his
song
Live sweetly yet; the hero if his star
Doth shine. Work is its own best
earthly meed,
Else have we none more than the
sea-born throng
Who wrought those marvellous isles
that bloom afar.



WISHING.

WHEN I reflect how little I have done,
And add to that how little I have
seen,
Then furthermore how little I have won
Of joy, or good, how little known, or
been:
I long for other life more full, more
keen,
And yearn to change with such as well
have run —
Yet reason mocks me — nay, the soul,
I ween,
Granted her choice would dare to
change with none;
No, — not to feel, as Blondel when his
lay
Pierced the strong tower, and Rich-
ard answered it —
No, not to do, as Eustace on the day
He left fair Calais to her weeping
fit —

No, not to be, — Columbus, waked from sleep
When his new world rose from the charmed deep.



TO —.

STRANGE was the doom of Heracles,
whose shade
Had dwelling in dim Hades the un-
blest,
While yet his form and presence sat a
guest
With the old immortals when the feast
was made.
Thine like, thus differs; form and pres-
ence laid
In this dim chamber of enforced
rest,
It is the unseen "shade" which,
risen, hath pressed
Above all heights where feet Olympian
strayed.
My soul admires to hear thee speak;
thy thought
Falls from a high place like an Au-
gust star,
Or some great eagle from his air-hung
rings —
When swooping past a snow-cold
mountain scar —
Down the steep slope of a long sunbeam
brought,
He stirs the wheat with the steerage
of his wings.



ON THE BORDERS OF CAN- NOCK CHASE.

A COTTAGER leaned whispering by her
hives,
Telling the bees some news, as they
lit down,
And entered one by one their waxen
town.
Larks passioning hung o'er their brood-
ing wives,
And all the sunny hills where heather
thrives

Lay satisfied with peace. A stately
crown
Of trees enringed the upper headland
brown,
And reedy pools, wherein the moor-hen
dives,
Glittered and gleamed.

A resting-place for light,
They that were bred here love it; but
they say,
"We shall not have it long; in three
years' time
A hundred pits will cast out fires by
night,
Down yon still glen their smoke shall
trail its way,
And the white ash lie thick in lieu of
rime."



THE MARINER'S CAVE.

ONCE on a time there walked a mariner,
That had been shipwrecked, on a
lonely shore,
And the green water made a restless
stir,
And a great flock of mews sped on
before.
He had nor food nor shelter, for the
tide
Rose on the one, and cliffs on the other
side.

Brown cliffs they were; they seemed to
pierce the sky,
That was an awful deep of empty
blue,
Save that the wind was in it, and on
high
A wavering skein of wild-fowl tracked
it through.
He marked them not, but went with
movement slow,
Because his thoughts were sad, his
courage low.

His heart was numb, he neither wept
nor sighed,
But wearifully lingered by the wave;

Until at length it chanced that he
espied,

Far up, an opening in the cliff, a
cave,
A shelter where to sleep in his distress,
And lose his sorrow in forgetfulness.

With that he clambered up the rugged
face

Of that steep cliff that all in shadow
lay,

And, lo, there was a dry and homelike
place,

Comforting refuge for the castaway ;
And he laid down his weary, weary
head,

And took his fill of sleep till dawn waxed
red.

When he awoke, warm stirring from
the south

Of delicate summer air did sough and
flow ;

He rose, and, wending to the cavern's
mouth,

He cast his eyes a little way below,
Where on the narrow ledges, sharp and
rude,

Preening their wings, the blue rock-
pigeons cooed.

Then he looked lower and saw the
lavender

And sea-thrift blooming in long crev-
ices,

And the brown wallflower — April's
messenger,

The wallflower marshalled in her
companies.

Then lower yet he looked adown the
steep,

And sheer beneath him lapped the
lovely deep.

The laughing deep ; — and it was paci-
fied

As if it had not raged that other day.
And it went murmuring in the morn-
ingtide

Innumerable flatteries on its way,
Kissing the cliffs and whispering at
their feet

With exquisite advancement, and re-
treat.

This when the mariner beheld he
sighed,

And thought on his companions lying
low.

But while he gazed with eyes unsat-
isfied

On the fair reaches of their over-
throw,

Thinking it strange he only lived of all,
But not returning thanks, he heard a
call !

A soft sweet call, a voice of tender ruth,
He thought it came from out the cave.

And, lo,
It whispered, "Man, look up!" But
he, forsooth,

Answered, "I cannot, for the long
waves flow

Across my gallant ship where sunk she
lies

With all my riches and my merchan-
dise.

"Moreover, I am heavy for the fate
Of these my mariners drowned in the
deep ;

I must lament me for their sad estate
Now they are gathered in their last
long sleep.

O! the pitying heavens upon me
frown,

Then how should I look up? — I must
look down."

And he stood yet watching the fair
green sea

Till hunger reached him ; then he
made a fire,

A driftwood fire, and wandered list-
lessly

And gathered many eggs at his de-
sire,

And dressed them for his meal, and
then he lay

And slept, and woke upon the second
day.

When as he said, "the cave shall be
my home ;

None will molest me, for the brown
cliffs rise

Like castles of defence behind, — the
foam
Of the remorseless sea beneath me
lies ;
'Tis easy from the cliff my food to
win, —
The nations of the rock-dove breed
therein.

"For fuel, at the ebb yon fair expanse
Is strewn with driftwood by the
breaking wave,
And in the sea is fish for sustenance.
I will build up the entrance of the
cave,
And leave therein a window and a door,
And here will dwell and leave it never-
more."

Then even so he did ; and when his
task,
Many long days being over, was com-
plete ;
When he had eaten, as he sat to bask
In the red firelight glowing at his feet,
He was right glad of shelter, and he
said,
"Now for my comrades am I com-
forted."

Then did the voice awake and speak
again ;
It murmured, "Man, look up!"
But he replied,
"I cannot. O, mine eyes, mine eyes
are faint
Down on the red wood-ashes to
abide
Because they warm me." Then the
voice was still,
And left the lonely mariner to his will.

And soon it came to pass that he got
gain.
He had great flocks of pigeons which
he fed,
And drew great store of fish from out
the main,
And down from eiderducks ; and
then he said,
"It is not good that I should lead my
life
In silence, I will take to me a wife."

He took a wife, and brought her home
to him ;
And he was good to her and cherished
her
So that she loved him ; then when
light waxed dim
Gloom came no more ; and she
would minister
To all his wants ; while he, being well
content,
Counted her company right excellent.

But once as on the lintel of the door
She leaned to watch him while he
put to sea,
This happy wife, down-gazing at the
shore,
Said sweetly, "It is better now with
me
Than it was lately when I used to spin
In my old father's house beside the
lin."

And then the soft voice of the cave
awoke —
The soft voice which had haunted it
erewhile —
And gently to the wife it also spoke,
"Woman, look up!" But she,
with tender guile
Gave it denial, answering, "Nay, not
so,
For all that I should look on lieth be-
low."

"The great sky overhead is not so
good
For my two eyes as yonder stainless
sea,
The source and yielder of our liveli-
hood,
Where rocks his little boat that
loveth me."
This when the wife had said she moved
away,
And looked no higher than the wave
all day.

Now when the year ran out a child she
bore,
And there was such rejoicing in the
cave
As surely never had there been before

Since God first made it. Then full,
sweet, and grave,
The voice, "God's utmost blessing
brims thy cup,
O, father of this child, look up, look
up!"

"Speak to my wife," the mariner re-
plied.

"I have much work — right welcome
work 'tis true —
Another mouth to feed." And then it
sighed,

"Woman, look up!" She said,
"Make no ado,
For I must needs look down, on any-
wise,
My heaven is in the blue of these dear
eyes."

The seasons of the year did swiftly
whirl,

They measured time by one small
life alone;
On such a day the pretty pushing
pearl

That mouth they loved to kiss had
sweetly shown,
That smiling mouth, and it had made
essay

To give them names on such another
day.

And afterward his infant history,

Whether he played with baubles on
the floor,
Or crept to pat the rock-doves pecking
nigh,

And feeding on the threshold of the
door,

They loved to mark, and all his mar-
vellings dim,

The mysteries that beguiled and baffled
him.

He was so sweet, that oft his mother
said,

"O, child, how was it that I dwelt
content

Before thou camest? Blessings on thy
head,

Thy pretty talk it is so innocent,

That oft for all my joy, though it be
deep,
When thou art prattling, I am like to
weep."

Summer and winter spent themselves
again,

The rock-doves in their season bred,
the cliff
Grew sweet, for every cleft would enter-
tain

Its tuft of blossom, and the mariner's
skiff,

Early and late, would linger in the
bay,

Because the sea was calm and winds
away.

The little child about that rocky
height,

Led by her loving hand who gave
him birth,

Might wander in the clear unclouded
light,

And takes his pastime in the beau-
teous earth;

Smell the fair flowers in stony cradles
swung,

And see God's happy creatures feed
their young.

And once it came to pass, at eventide,
His mother set him in the cavern
door,

And filled his lap with grain, and stood
aside

To watch the circling rock-doves
soar, and soar,

Then dip, alight, and run in circling
bands,

To take the barley from his open hands.

And even while she stood and gazed at
him,

And his grave father's eyes upon
him dwelt,

They heard the tender voice, and it
was dim,

And seemed full softly in the air to
melt;

"Father," it murmured, "Mother,"
dying away,

"Look up, while yet the hours are
called to-day."

"I will," the father answered, "but not now ;"

The mother said, "Sweet voice, O speak to me
At a convenient season." And the brow

Of the cliff began to quake right fearfully,
There was a rending crash, and there did leap
A riven rock and plunge into the deep.

They said, "A storm is coming ;" but they slept

That night in peace, and thought the storm had passed,

For there was not a cloud to intercept
The sacred moonlight on the cradle cast ;

And to his rocking boat at dawn of day,
With joy of heart the mariner took his way.

But when he mounted up the path at night,
Foreboding not of trouble or mischance,

His wife came out into the fading light,
And met him with a serious countenance ;

And she broke out in tears and sobbings thick,
"The child is sick, my little child is sick."

They knelt beside him in the sultry dark,

And when the moon looked in his face was pale,

And when the red sun, like a burning barque,

Rose in a fog at sea, his tender wail
Sank deep into their hearts, and piteously

They fell to chiding of their destiny.

The doves unheeded cooed that live-long day,

Their pretty playmate cared for them no more ;

The sea-thrift nodded, wet with glistering spray,

None gathered it ; the long wave washed the shore ;

He did not know, nor lift his eyes to trace,

The new fallen shadow in his dwelling-place.

The sultry sun beat on the cliffs all day,

And hot calm airs slept on the polished sea,

The mournful mother wore her time away,

Bemoaning of her helpless misery,
Pleading and plaining, till the day was done,

"O look on me, my love, my little one.

"What aileth thee, that thou dost lie and moan?

Ah, would that I might bear it in thy stead."

The father made not his forebodings known,

But gazed, and in his secret soul he said,

"I may have sinned, on sin waits punishment,

But as for him, sweet blameless innocent,

"What has he done that he is stricken down?

O it is hard to see him sink and fade,

When I, that counted him my dear life's crown,

So willingly have worked while he has played ;

That he might sleep, have risen, come storm, come heat,

And thankfully would fast that he might eat."

My God, how short our happy days appear!

How long the sorrowful! They thought it long,

The sultry morn that brought such evil cheer,

And sat, and wished, and sighed for evensong ;

It came, and cooling wafts about him
 stirred,
 Yet when they spoke he answered not
 a word.

"Take heart," they cried, but their sad
 hearts sank low

When he would moan and turn his
 restless head,
 And wearily the lagging morns would
 go,

And nights, while they sat watching
 by his bed,
 Until a storm came up with wind and
 rain,
 And lightning ran along the troubled
 main.

Over their heads the mighty thunders
 brake,

Leaping and tumbling down from
 rock to rock,

Then burst anew and made the cliffs to
 quake

As they were living things and felt
 the shock ;

The waiting sea to sob as if in pain,
 And all the midnight vault to ring
 again.

A lamp was burning in the mariner's
 cave,

But the blue lightning flashes made
 it dim ;

And when the mother heard those
 thunders rave,

She took her little child to cherish
 him ;

She took him in her arms, and on her
 breast

Full wearily she courted him to rest,

And soothed him long until the storm
 was spent,

And the last thunder peal had died
 away,

And stars were out in all the firmament.

Then did he cease to moan, and slum-
 bering lay,

While in the welcome silence, pure and
 deep,

The care-worn parents sweetly fell
 asleep.

And in a dream, enwrought with fan-
 cies thick,

The mother thought she heard the
 rock-doves coo

(She had forgotten that her child was
 sick),

And she went forth their morning
 meal to strew ;

Then over all the cliff with earnest
 care

She sought her child, and lo, he was
 not there !

But she was not afraid, though long she
 sought

And climbed the cliff, and set her feet
 in grass,

Then reached a river, broad and full,
 she thought,

And at its brink he sat. Alas ! alas !

For one stood near him, fair and unde-
 filed,

An innocent, a marvellous man-child.

In garments white as wool, and O, most
 fair,

A rainbow covered him with mystic
 light ;

Upon the warmed grass his feet were
 bare,

And as he breathed, the rainbow in
 her sight

In passions of clear crimson trembling
 lay,

With gold and violet mist made fair the
 day.

Her little life ! she thought, his little
 hands

Were full of flowers that he did play
 withal ;

But when he saw the boy o' the golden
 lands,

And looked him in the face, he let
 them fall,

Held through a rapturous pause in
 wistful wise

To the sweet strangeness of those keen
 child-eyes.

" Ah, dear and awful God, who chasten-
 est me,

How shall my soul to this be recon-
 ciled.

It is the Saviour of the world," quoth she,
 "And to my child He cometh as a child."
 Then on her knees she fell by that vast stream—
 Oh, it was sorrowful, this woman's dream!

For lo, that Elder-Child drew nearer now,
 Fair as the light, and purer than the sun.
 The calms of heaven were brooding on his brow,
 And in his arms He took her little one,
 Her child, that knew her, but with sweet demur
 Drew back, nor held his hands to come to her.

With that in mother misery sore she wept—
 "O Lamb of God, I love my child SO MUCH!
 He stole away to Thee while we two slept,
 But give him back, for Thou hast many such;
 And as for me I have but one. O deign,
 Dear Pity of God, to give him me again."

His feet were on the river. Oh, his feet
 Had touched the river now, and it was great;
 And yet He hearkened when she did entreat,
 And turned in quietness as He would wait—
 Wait till she looked upon Him, and behold,
 There lay a long way off a city of gold.

Like to a jasper and a sardine stone,
 Whelmed in the rainbow stood that fair man-child,
 Mighty and innocent, that held her own,

And as might be his manner at home he smiled,
 Then while she looked and looked, the vision brake,
 And all amazed she started up awake.

And lo, her little child was gone indeed!

The sleep that knows no waking he had slept,
 Folded to heaven's own heart; in rainbow-bow brede

Clothed and made glad, while they two mourned and wept,
 But in the drinking of their bitter cup
 The sweet voice spoke once more, and sighed, "Look up!"

They heard, and straightway answered,
 "Even so:

For what abides that we should look on here?

The heavens are better than this earth below,

They are of more account and far more dear.

We will look up, for all most sweet and fair,

Most pure, most excellent, is garnered there."



A REVERIE.

WHEN I do sit apart
 And commune with my heart,
 She brings me forth the treasures once my own;
 Shows me a happy place
 Where leaf-buds swelled apace,
 And wasting rims of snow in sunlight shone.

Rock, in a mossy glade,
 The larch-trees lend thee shade,
 That just begin to feather with their leaves;
 From out thy crevice deep
 White tufts of snowdrops peep,
 And melted rime drips softly from thine eaves.

Ah, rock, I know, I know
That yet thy snowdrops grow,
And yet doth sunshine fleck them
through the tree,
Whose sheltering branches hide
The cottage at its side,
That nevermore will shade or shelter
me.

I know the stockdoves' note
Athwart the glen doth float:
With sweet foreknowledge of her twins
oppressed,
And longings onward sent,
She broods before the event,
While leisurely she mends her shallow
nest.

Once to that cottage door,
In happy days of yore,
My little love made footprints in the
snow.
She was so glad of spring,
She helped the birds to sing,
I know she dwells there yet — the rest
I do not know.

They sang, and would not stop,
While drop, and drop, and drop,
I heard the melted rime in sunshine
fall;
And narrow wandering rills,
Where leaned the daffodils,
Murmured and murmured on, and that
was all.

I think, but cannot tell,
I think she loved me well,
And some dear fancy with my future
twined.
But I shall never know,
Hope faints, and lets it go,
That passionate want forbid to speak
its mind.

DEFTON WOOD.

I HELD my way through Defton Wood,
And on to Wandor Hall;
The dancing leaf let down the light,
In hovering spots to fall.

"O young, young leaves, you match
me well,"
My heart was merry, and sung —
"Now wish me joy of my sweet youth;
My love — she, too, is young!"

O so many, many, many
Little homes above my head!
O so many, many, many
Dancing blossoms round me
spread!
O so many, many, many
Maidens sighing yet for none!
Speed, ye wooers, speed with
any —
Speed with all but one."

I took my leave of Wandor Hall,
And trod the woodland ways.
"What shall I do so long to bear
The burden of my days?"
I sighed my heart into the boughs
Whereby the culvers cooed;
For only I between them went
Unwooing and unwooed.

"O so many, many, many
Lilies bending stately heads!
O so many, many, many
Strawberries ripened on their
beds!
O so many, many, many
Maidens, and yet my heart undone!
What to me are all, are any —
I have lost my — one."

THE SNOWDROP MONUMENT,

(In Lichfield Cathedral).

MARVELS of sleep, grown cold!
Who hath not longed to fold
With pitying ruth, forgetful of their
bliss,
Those cherub forms that lie,
With none to watch them nigh,
Or touch the silent lips with one warm
human kiss?

What! they are left alone
 All night with graven stone,
 Pillars and arches that above them
 meet;
 While through those windows
 high
 The journeying stars can spy,
 And dim blue moonbeams drop on
 their uncovered feet?

O cold! yet look again,
 There is a wandering vein
 Traced in the hand where those white
 snowdrops lie.
 Let her rapt dreamy smile
 The wondering heart beguile,
 That almost thinks to hear a calm con-
 tented sigh.

What silence dwells between
 Those severed lips serene!
 The rapture of sweet waiting breathes
 and grows.
 What trance-like peace is shed
 On her reclining head,
 And e'en on listless feet what languor
 of repose!

Angels of joy and love
 Lean softly from above
 And whisper to her sweet and marvel-
 lous things;
 Tell of the golden gate
 That opened wide doth wait,
 And shadow her dim sleep with their
 celestial wings.

Hearing of that blest shore
 She thinks on earth no more,
 Contented to forego this wintry land.
 She has nor thought nor care
 But to rest calmly there,
 And hold the snowdrops pale that
 blossom in her hand.

But on the other face
 Broodeth a mournful grace,
 This had foreboding thoughts beyond
 her years,
 While sinking thus to sleep
 She saw her mother weep,
 And could not lift her hand to dry
 those heart-sick tears.

Could not—but failing lay,
 Sighed her young life away,
 And let her arm drop down in listless
 rest,
 Too weary on that bed
 To turn her dying head,
 Or fold the little sister nearer to her
 breast.

Yet this is faintly told
 On features fair and cold,
 A look of calm surprise, of meek re-
 gret,
 As if with life oppressed
 She turned her to her rest,
 But felt her mother's love and looked
 not to forget.

How wistfully they close,
 Sweet eyes, to their repose!
 How quietly declines the placid brow!
 The young lips seem to say,
 "I have wept much to-day,
 And felt some bitter pains, but they
 are over now."

Sleep! there are left below
 Many who pine to go,
 Many who lay it to their chastened
 souls,
 That gloomy days draw nigh,
 And they are blest who die,
 For this green world grows worse the
 longer that she rolls.

And as for me I know
 A little of her woe,
 Her yearning want doth in my soul
 abide,
 And sighs of them that weep,
 "O put us soon to sleep,
 For when we wake—with Thee—we
 shall be satisfied."



AN ANCIENT CHESS KING.

HAPLY some Rajah first in the ages
 gone
 Amid his languid ladies fingered thee,
 While a black nightingale, sun-swart
 as he,

Sang his one wife, love's passionate
 oraison ;
 Haply thou may'st have pleased Old
 Prester John
 Among his pastures, when full roy-
 ally
 He sat in tent, grave shepherds at
 his knee,
 While lamps of balsam winked and
 glimmered on.
 What doest thou here? Thy masters
 are all dead ;
 My heart is full of ruth and yearning
 pain
 At sight of thee ; O king that hast a
 crown
 Outlasting theirs, and tell'st of great-
 ness fled
 Through cloud-hung nights of una-
 bated rain
 And murmurs of the dark majestic
 town.



COMFORT IN THE NIGHT.

SHE thought by heaven's high wall that
 she did stray
 Till she beheld the everlasting gate :
 And she climbed up to it to long,
 and wait,
 Feel with her hands (for it was night),
 and lay
 Her lips to it with kisses ; thus to
 pray
 That it might open to her desolate.
 And lo ! it trembled, lo ! her passion-
 ate
 Crying prevailed. A little, little way
 It opened : there fell out a thread of
 light,
 And she saw winged wonders move
 within ;
 Also she heard sweet talking as they
 meant
 To comfort her. They said, "Who
 comes to-night
 Shall one day certainly an entrance
 win ;"
 Then the gate closed and she awoke
 content.

THOUGH ALL GREAT DEEDS.

THOUGH all great deeds were proved
 but fables fine,
 Though earth's old story could be
 told anew,
 Though the sweet fashions loved of
 them that sue
 Were empty as the ruined Delphian
 shrine —
 Though God did never man, in words
 benign,
 With sense of His great Fatherhood
 endue, —
 Though life immortal were a dream
 untrue,
 And He that promised it were not di-
 vine —
 Though soul, though spirit were not,
 and all hope
 Reaching beyond the bourn, melted
 away ;
 Though virtue had no goal and good no
 scope,
 But both were doomed to end with
 this our clay —
 Though all these were not, — to the un-
 graced heir
 Would this remain, — to live, as though
 they were.



THE LONG WHITE SEAM.

As I came round the harbor buoy,
 The lights began to gleam,
 No wave the land-locked water stirred,
 The crags were white as cream ;
 And I marked my love by candle-light
 Sewing her long white seam.
 It's aye sewing ashore, my dear,
 Watch and steer at sea,
 It's reef and furl, and haul the
 line,
 Set sail and think of thee.

I climbed to reach her cottage door ;
 O sweetly my love sings !
 Like a shaft of light her voice breaks
 forth,
 My soul to meet it springs

As the shining water leaped of old,
 When stirred by angel wings.
 Aye longing to list anew,
 Awake and in my dream,
 But never a song she sang like this,
 Sewing her long white seam.

Fair fall the lights, the harbor lights,
 That brought me in to thee,
 And peace drop down on that low roof
 For the sight that I did see,
 And the voice, my dear, that rang so
 clear
 All for the love of me.
 For O, for O, with brows bent low
 By the candle's flickering gleam,
 Her wedding gown it was she
 wrought,
 Sewing the long white seam.



AN OLD WIFE'S SONG.

AND what will ye hear, my daughters
 dear? —

Oh, what will ye hear this night?
 Shall I sing you a song of the yuletide
 cheer,
 Or of lovers and ladies bright?

"Thou shalt sing," they say (for we
 dwell far away,
 From the land where fain would we be),
 "Thou shalt sing us again some old-
 world strain
 That is sung in our own countrie.

"Thou shalt mind us so of the times
 long ago,
 When we walked on the upland lea,
 While the old harbor light waxed faint
 in the white,
 Long rays shooting out from the sea;

"While lambs were yet asleep, and the
 dew lay deep
 On the grass, and their fleeces clean
 and fair.
 Never grass was seen so thick nor so
 green
 As the grass that grew up there!

"In the town was no smoke, for none
 there awoke —
 At our feet it lay still as still could
 be;

And we saw far below the long river
 flow,
 And the schooners a-warping out to
 sea.

"Sing us now a strain shall make us
 feel again
 As we felt in that sacred peace of
 morn,
 When we had the first view of the wet
 sparkling dew,
 In the shyness of a day just born."

So I sang an old song — it was plain
 and not long —
 I had sung it very oft when they
 were small;
 And long ere it was done they wept
 every one:
 Yet this was all the song — this was
 all: —

The snow lies white, and the moon
 gives light,
 I'll out to the freezing mere,
 And ease my heart with one little song,
 For none will be nigh to hear.
 And it's O my love, my love!
 And it's O my dear, my dear!
 It's of her that I'll sing till the wild
 woods ring,
 When nobody's nigh to hear.

My love is young, she is young, is
 young;
 When she laughs the dimple dips.
 We walked in the wind, and her long
 locks blew
 Till sweetly they touched my lips.
 And I'll out to the freezing mere,
 Where the stiff reeds whistle so low,
 And I'll tell my mind to the friendly
 wind,
 Because I have loved her so.

Ay, and she's true, my lady is true!
 And that's the best of it all;
 And when she blushes my heart so
 years

That tears are ready to fall.
 And it's O my love, my love!
 And it's O my dear, my dear!
 It's of her that I'll sing till the wild
 woods ring,
 When nobody's nigh to hear.

COLD AND QUIET.

COLD, my dear, — cold and quiet.
 In their cups on yonder lea,
 Cowslips fold the brown bee's diet;
 So the moss enfoldeth thee.
 "Plant me, plant me, O love, a lily
 flower —
 Plant at my head, I pray you, a
 green tree;
 And when our children sleep," she
 sighed, "at the dusk hour,
 And when the lily blossoms, O come
 out to me!"

Lost, my dear? Lost! nay, deepest
 Love is that which loseth least;
 Through the night-time while thou
 sleeppest,
 Still I watch the shrouded east.
 Near thee, near thee, my wife that aye
 liveth,
 "Lost" is no word for such a love as
 mine;
 Love from her past to me a present
 giveth,
 And love itself doth comfort, making
 pain divine.

Rest, my dear, rest. Fair showeth
 That which was, and not in vain
 Sacred have I kept, God knoweth,
 Love's last words atween us
 twain.
 "Hold by our past, my only love, my
 lover;
 Fall not, but rise, O love, by loss of
 me!"
 Boughs from our garden, white with
 bloom hang over.
 Love, now the children slumber, I
 come out to thee.

A SNOW MOUNTAIN.

CAN I make white enough my thought
 for thee,
 Or wash my words in light? Thou
 hast no mate
 To sit aloft in the silence silently
 And twin those matchless heights un-
 desecrate.
 Reverend as Lear, when, lorn of shel-
 ter, he
 Stood, with his old white head, sur-
 prised at fate;
 Alone as Galileo, when, set free,
 Before the stars he mused disconso-
 late.
 Ay, and remote, as the dead lords of
 song,
 Great masters who have made us
 what we are,
 For thou and they have taught us how
 to long
 And feel a sacred want of the fair and
 far:
 Reign, and keep life in this our deep
 desire —
 Our only greatness is that we aspire.

SLEEP.

(A WOMAN SPEAKS.)

O SLEEP, we are beholden to thee,
 sleep,
 Thou bearest angels to us in the
 night,
 Saints out of heaven with palms.
 Seen by thy light
 Sorrow is some old tale that goeth
 not deep;
 Love is a pouting child. Once I did
 sweep
 Through space with thee, and lo,
 a dazzling sight —
 Stars! They came on, I felt their
 drawing and might;
 And some had dark companions. Once
 (I weep
 When I remember that) we sailed the
 tide,
 And found fair isles, where no isles
 used to bide,

And met there my lost love, who said
to me,
*That 'twas a long mistake : he had not
died.*

Sleep, in the world to come how
strange 'twill be
Never to want, never to wish for
thee!

PROMISING.

(A MAN SPEAKS.)

ONCE, a new world, the sun-swart mar-
inere,
Columbus, promised, and was sore
withstood,
Ungraced, unhelped, unheard for many
a year;
But let at last to make his promise
good.
Promised and promising I go, most
dear,
To better my dull heart with love's
sweet feud,
My life with its most reverent hope
and fear,
And my religion, with fair gratitude.
O we must part; the stars for me con-
tend,
And all the winds that blow on all
the seas.
Through wonderful waste places I must
wend,
And with a promise my sad soul ap-
pease.

Promise then, promise much of far-off
bliss;
But — ah, for present joy, give me one
kiss.

LOVE.

Who veileth love should first have van-
quished fate.
She folded up the dream in her deep
heart,
Her fair full lips were silent on that
smart,
Thick fringed eyes did on the grasses
wait.
What good? one eloquent blush, but
one, and straight
The meaning of a life was known;
for art
Is often foiled in playing nature's
part,
And time holds nothing long invio-
late.
Earth's buried seed springs up —
slowly, or fast:
The ring came home, that one in ages
past
Flung to the keeping of unfathomed
seas:
And golden apples on the mystic
trees
Were sought and found, and borne
away at last,
Though watched of the divine Hes-
perides.

POEMS

*Written on the Deaths of Three Lovely Children who were taken from their
Parents within a month of one another.*

HENRY,

AGED EIGHT YEARS.

YELLOW leaves, how fast they flutter — woodland hollows thickly strewing,
Where the wan October sunbeams scanty in the mid-day win,
While the dim gray clouds are drifting, and in saddened hues imbuing
All without and all within!

All within! but winds of autumn, little Henry, round their dwelling
Did not load your father's spirit with those deep and burdened sighs; —
Only echoed thoughts of sadness, in your mother's bosom swelling,
Fast as tears that dim her eyes.

Life is fraught with many changes, checked with sorrow and mutation,
But no grief it ever lightened such a truth before to know: —
I behold them — father, mother — as they seemed to contemplation,
Only three short weeks ago!

Saddened for the morrow's parting — up the stairs at midnight stealing —
As with cautious foot we glided past the children's open door, —
“Come in here,” they said, the lamplight dimpled forms at last revealing,
“Kiss them in their sleep once more.”

You were sleeping, little Henry, with your eyelids scarcely closing,
Two sweet faces near together, with their rounded arms entwined: —
And the rose-bud lips were moving, as if stirred in their reposing
By the movements of the mind!

And your mother smoothed the pillow, and her sleeping treasures numbered,
Whispering fondly — “He is dreaming” — as you turned upon your bed —
And your father stooped to kiss you, happy dreamer, as you slumbered,
With his hand upon your head!

Did he know the true deep meaning of his blessing? No! he never
Heard afar the summons uttered — “Come up hither” — Never knew
How the awful Angel faces kept his sleeping boy for ever,
And for ever in their view.

Awful Faces, unimpassioned, silent Presences were by us,
 Shrouding wings — majestic beings — hidden by this earthly veil —
 Such as we have called on, saying, "Praise the Lord, O Ananias,
 Azarias, and Misael!"

But we saw not, and who knoweth, what the missioned Spirits taught him,
 To that one small bed drawn nearer, when we left him to their will?
 While he slumbered, who can answer for what dreams they may have brought him,
 When at midnight all was still?

Father! Mother! must you leave him on his bed, but not to slumber?
 Are the small hands meekly folded on his breast, but not to pray?
 When you count your children over, must you tell a different number,
 Since that happier yesterday?

Father! Mother! weep if need be, since this is a "time" for weeping,
 Comfort comes not for the calling, grief is never argued down —
 Coldly sounds the admonition, "Why lament? in better keeping
 Rests the child than in your own."

"Truth indeed! but, oh! compassion! Have you sought to scan my sorrow?"
 (Mother, you shall meekly ponder, list'ning to that common tale)
 "Does your heart repeat its echo, or by fellow-feeling borrow
 Even a tone that might avail?"

"Might avail to steal it from me, by its deep heart-warm affection?
 Might perceive by strength of loving how the fond words to combine?
 Surely no! I will be silent, in your soul is no reflection
 Of the care that burdens mine!"

When the winter twilight gathers, Father, and your thoughts shall wander,
 Sitting lonely you shall blend him with your listless reveries,
 Half forgetful what division holds the form whereon you ponder
 From its place upon your knees —

With a start of recollection, with a half-reproachful wonder,
 Of itself the heart shall question, "Art Thou then no longer here?
 Is it so, my little Henry? Are we set so far asunder
 Who were wont to be so near?"

While the fire-light dimly flickers, and the lengthened shades are meeting,
 To itself the heart shall answer, "He shall come to me no more:
 I shall never hear his footsteps nor the child's sweet voice entreating
 For admission at my door."

But upon *your* fair, fair forehead, no regrets nor griefs are dwelling,
 Neither sorrow nor disquiet do the peaceful features know;
 Nor that look, whose wistful beauty seemed their sad hearts to be telling,
 "Daylight breaketh, let me go!"

Daylight breaketh, little Henry; in its beams your soul awaketh—
 What though night should close around us, dim and dreary to the view—
 Though *our* souls should walk in darkness, far away that morning breaketh
 Into endless day for you!

SAMUEL,

AGED NINE YEARS.

THEY have left you, little Henry, but they have not left you lonely—
 Brothers' hearts so knit together could not, might not separate dwell,
 Fain to seek you in the mansions far away—One lingered only
 To bid those behind farewell!

Gentle Boy!—His childlike nature in most guileless form was moulded,
 And it may be that his spirit woke in glory unaware,
 Since so calmly he resigned it, with his hands still meekly folded,
 Having said his evening prayer.

Or—if conscious of that summons—"Speak, O Lord, Thy servant heareth"—
 As one said, whose name they gave him, might his willing answer be,
 "Here am I"—like him replying—"At Thy gates my soul appeareth,
 For behold Thou calledst me!"

A deep silence—utter silence, on his earthly home descendeth:—
 Reading, playing, sleeping, waking—he is gone, and few remain!
 "O the loss!"—they utter, weeping—every voice its echo lendeth—
 "O the loss!"—But, O the gain!

On that tranquil shore his spirit was vouchsafed an early landing,
 Lest the toils of crime should stain it, or the thrall of guilt control—
 Lest that "wickedness should alter the yet simple understanding,
 Or deceit beguile his soul!"

"Lay not up on earth thy treasure"—they have read that sentence duly,
 Moth and rust shall fret thy riches—earthly good hath swift decay—
 "Even so," each heart replieth—"As for me, my riches truly
 Make them wings and flee away!"

"O my riches!—O my children!—dearest part of life and being,
 Treasures looked to for the solace of this life's declining years,—
 Were our voices cold to hearing—or our faces cold to seeing,
 That ye left us to our tears?"

"We inherit conscious silence, ceasing of some merry laughter,
 And the hush of two sweet voices—(healing sounds for spirits bruised!)
 Of the tread of joyous footsteps in the pathway following after,
 Of two names no longer used!"

Question for them, little Sister, in your sweet and childish fashion —
 Search and seek them, Baby Brother, with your calm and asking eyes —
 Dimpled lips that fail to utter fond appeal or sad compassion,
 Mild regret or dim surprise!

There are two tall trees above you, by the high east window growing,
 Underneath them, slumber sweetly, lapt in silence deep, serene;
 Save, when pealing in the distance, organ notes towards you flowing
 Echo — with a pause between!

And that pause? — a voice shall fill it — tones that blessed you daily, nightly,
 Well beloved, but not sufficing, Sleepers, to awake you now,
 Though so near he stand, that shadows from your trees may tremble lightly
 On his book and on his brow!

Sleep then ever! Neither singing of sweet birds shall break your slumber,
 Neither fall of dew, nor sunshine, dance of leaves, nor drift of snow,
 Charm those dropt lids more to open, nor the tranquil bosoms cumber
 With one care for things below!

It is something, the assurance, that *you* ne'er shall feel like sorrow,
 Weep no past and dread no future — know not sighing, feel not pain —
 Nor a day that looketh forward to a mournfuller to-morrow —
 "Clouds returning after rain!"

No, far off, the daylight breaketh, in its beams each soul awaketh:
 "What though clouds," they sigh, "be gathered dark and stormy to the view,
 Though the light our eyes forsaketh, fresh and sweet behold it breaketh
 Into endless day for you!"

KATIE, AGED FIVE YEARS.

(ASLEEP IN THE DAYTIME.)

ALL rough winds are hushed and silent, golden light the meadow steepeth,
 And the last October roses daily wax more pale and fair;
 They have laid a gathered blossom on the breast of one who sleepeth
 With a sunbeam on her hair.

Calm, and draped in snowy raiment she lies still, as one that dreameth,
 And a grave sweet smile hath parted dimpled lips that may not speak;
 Slanting down that narrow sunbeam like a ray of glory gleameth
 On the sainted brow and cheek.

There is silence! They who watch her, speak no word of grief or wailing,
 In a strange unwonted calmness they gaze on and cannot cease,
 Though the pulse of life beat faintly, thought shrink back, and hope be failing,
 They, like Aaron, "hold their peace."

While they gaze on her, the deep bell with its long slow pauses soundeth ;
Long they hearken — father — mother — love has nothing more to say :
Beating time to feet of Angels leading her where love aboundeth
Tolls the heavy bell this day.

Still in silence to its tolling they count over all her meetness
To lie near their hearts and soothe them in all sorrows and all fears ;
Her short life lies spread before them, but they cannot tell her sweetness,
Easily as tell her years.

Only daughter — Ah ! how fondly Thought around that lost name lingers,
Oft when lone your mother sitteth, she shall weep and droop her head,
She shall mourn her baby-sempstress, with those imitative fingers,
Drawing out her aimless thread.

In your father's Future cometh many a sad uncheered to-morrow,
But in sleep shall three fair faces heavenly-calm towards him lean —
Like a threefold cord shall draw him through the weariness of sorrow,
Nearer to the things unseen.

With the closing of your eyelids close the dreams of expectation,
And so ends the fairest chapter in the records of their way :
Therefore — O thou God most holy — God of rest and consolation,
Be Thou near to them this day !

Be Thou near, when they shall nightly, by the bed of infant brothers,
Hear their soft and gentle breathing, and shall bless them on their knees ;
And shall think how coldly falleth the white moonlight on the others,
In their bed beneath the trees.

Be Thou near, when they, they *only*, bear those faces in remembrance,
And the number of their children strangers ask them with a smile ;
And when other childlike faces touch them by the strong resemblance
To those turned to them erewhile.

Be Thou near, each chastened Spirit for its course and conflict nerving,
Let Thy voice say, " Father — mother — lo ! thy treasures live above !
Now be strong, be strong, no longer cumbered over much with serving
At the shrine of human love."

Let them sleep ! In course of ages e'en the Holy House shall crumble,
And the broad and stately steeple one day bend to its decline,
And high arches, ancient arches bowed and decked in clothing humble,
Creeping moss shall round them twine.

Ancient arches, old and hoary, sunny beams shall glimmer through them,
And invest them with a beauty we would fain they should not share,
And the moonlight slanting down them, the white moonlight shall imbue them
With a sadness dim and fair.

Then the soft green moss shall wrap you, and the world shall all forget you,
 Life, and stir, and toil, and tumult unawares shall pass you by;
 Generations come and vanish : but it shall not grieve nor fret you,
 That they sigh, or that they sigh.

And the world, grown old in sinning, shall deny her first beginning,
 And think scorn of words which whisper how that all must pass away;
 Time's arrest and intermission shall account a vain tradition,
 And a dream, the reckoning day!

Till His blast, a blast of terror, shall awake in shame and sadness
 Faithless millions to a vision of the failing earth and skies,
 And more sweet than song of Angels, in their shout of joy and gladness,
 Call the dead in Christ to rise!

Then, by One Man's intercession, standing clear from their transgression,
 Father — mother — you shall meet them fairer than they were before,
 And have joy with the Redeemèd, joy ear hath not heard — heart dreamèd,
 Ay for ever — evermore!

THE TWO MARGARETS.

I.

MARGARET BY THE MERE SIDE.

LYING imbedded in the green cham-
 paign
 That gives no shadow to thy silvery
 face,
 Open to all the heavens, and all their
 train,
 The marshalled clouds that cross with
 stately pace,
 No steadfast hills on thee reflected rest,
 Nor waver with the dimpling of thy
 breast.

O, silent Mere! about whose margins
 spring
 Thick bulrushes to hide the reed-
 bird's nest;
 Where the shy ousel dips her glossy
 wing, [rest :
 And balanced in the water takes her
 While under bending leaves, all gem-
 arrayed,
 Blue dragon-flies sit panting in the
 shade :

Warm, stilly place, the sundew loves
 thee well,
 And the green sward comes creeping
 to thy brink,
 And golden saxifrage and pimpernel
 Lean down to thee their perfumed
 heads to drink;
 And heavy with the weight of bees doth
 bend
 White clover, and beneath thy wave
 descend :

While the sweet scent of bean-fields,
 floated wide
 On a long eddy of the lightsome air
 Over the level mead to thy lone side,
 Doth lose itself among thy zephyrs
 rare,
 With wafts from hawthorn bowers and
 new-cut hay,
 And blooming orchards lying far away.

Thou hast thy Sabbaths, when a deeper
 calm
 Descends upon thee, quiet Mere, and
 then
 There is a sound of bells, a far-off
 psalm
 From gray church towers, that swims
 across the fen ;

And the light sigh where grass and
waters meet,
Is thy meek welcome to the visit sweet.

Thou hast thy lovers. Though the
angler's rod
Dimple thy surface seldom; though
the oar
Fill not with silvery globes thy fringing
sod,

Nor send long ripples to thy lonely
shore;
Though few, as in a glass, have cared
to trace
The smile of nature moving on thy face;

Thou hast thy lovers truly. 'Mid the
cold
Of northern tarns the wild-fowl dream
of thee,
And, keeping thee in mind, their wings
unfold,

And shape their course, high soaring,
till they see
Down in the world, like molten silver,
rest
Their goal, and screaming plunge them
in thy breast.

Fair Margaret, who sittest all day
long
On the gray stone beneath the sycamore,

The bowering tree with branches lithe
and strong,

The only one to grace the level shore,
Why dost thou wait? for whom with
patient cheer
Gaze yet so wistfully adown the Mere?

Thou canst not tell, thou dost not know,
alas!

Long watchings leave behind them
little trace;

And yet how sweetly must the morn-
ings pass,

That bring that dreamy calmness to
thy face!

How quickly must the evenings come
that find

Thee still regret to leave the Mere be-
hind!

Thy cheek is resting on thy hand; thine
eyes

Are like twin violets but half unclosed,
And quiet as the deeps in yonder skies.

Never more peacefully in love reposed
A mother's gaze upon her offspring
dear,

Than thine upon the long far-stretch-
ing Mere.

Sweet innocent! Thy yellow hair floats
low

In rippling undulations on thy breast,
Then stealing down the parted love-
locks flow,

Bathed in a sunbeam on thy knees to
rest,

And touch those idle hands that folded
lie,

Having from sport and toil a like im-
munity.

Through thy life's dream with what a
touching grace

Childhood attends thee, nearly woman
grown;

Her dimples linger yet upon thy face,
Like dew upon a lily this day blown;

Thy sighs are born of peace, unruffled,
deep;

So the babe sighs on mother's breast
asleep.

It sighs, and wakes, — but thou! thy
dream is all,

And thou wert born for it, and it for
thee;

Morn doth not take thy heart, nor even-
fall

Charm out its sorrowful fidelity,
Nor noon beguile thee from the pas-
toral shore,

And thy long watch beneath the sycamore.

No, down the Mere, as far as eye can
see,

Where its long reaches fade into the
sky,

Thy constant gaze, fair child, rests
lovingly;

But neither thou nor any can descry

Aught but the grassy banks, the rustling
 sedge,
 And flocks of wild-fowl splashing at
 their edge.

And yet 'tis not with expectation
 hushed

That thy mute rosy mouth doth pout-
 ing close :
 No fluttering hope to thy young heart
 e'er rushed.

Nor disappointment troubled its re-
 pose ;
 All satisfied with gazing evermore
 Along the sunny Mere and reedy shore.

The brooding wren flies pertly near thy
 seat,

Thou wilt not move to mark her
 glancing wing ;
 The timid sheep browse close before thy
 feet,

And heedless at thy side do thrushes
 sing.
 So long amongst them thou hast spent
 thy days,
 They know that harmless hand thou
 wilt not raise.

Thou wilt not lift it up—not e'en to
 take

The foxglove bells that flourish in the
 shade,
 And put them in thy bosom ; not to
 make

A posy of wild hyacinth inlaid
 Like bright mosaic in the mossy grass,
 With freckled orchis and pale sassa-
 fras.

Gaze on ;—take in the voices of the
 Mere,

The break of shallow water at thy
 feet,
 Its splash among long reeds and grasses
 sere,

And its weird sobbing,—hollow music
 meet

For ears like thine ; listen and take thy
 fill,
 And dream on it by night, when all is
 still.

Full sixteen years have slowly passed
 away,

Young Margaret, since thy fond
 mother here

Came down, a six months' wife, one
 April day,

To see her husband's boat go down
 the Mere,

And track its course, till, lost in distance
 blue,

In mellow light it faded from her view.

It faded, and she never saw it more ;—
 Nor any human eye ;—oh, grief ! oh,
 woe !

It faded,—and returned not to the
 shore ;

But far above it still the waters flow—
 And none beheld it sink, and none could
 tell

Where coldly slept the form she loved
 so well !

But that sad day, unknowing of her
 fate,

She homeward turn'd her still reluc-
 tant feet ;

And at her wheel she spun, till dark and
 late,

The evening fell ;—the time when
 they should meet ;—

Till the stars paled that at deep mid-
 night burned—

And morning dawned, and he was not
 returned.

And the bright sun came up,—she
 thought too soon,—

And shed his ruddy light along the
 Mere ;

And day wore on too quickly, and at
 noon

She came and wept beside the waters
 clear.

“How could he be so late?”—and
 then hope fled ;

And disappointment darkened into
 dread.

He NEVER came, and she with weepings
 sore

Peered in the water-flags unceasingly ;

Through all the undulations of the shore,

Looking for that which most she feared to see.

And then she took home sorrow to her heart,

And brooded over its cold, cruel smart.

And after, desolate she sat alone

And mourned, refusing to be comforted,

On the gray stone, the moss-embroidered stone,

With the great sycamore above her head;

Till after many days a broken oar

Hard by her seat was drifted to the shore.

It came, — a token of his fate, — the whole,

The sum of her misfortune to reveal ;
As if sent up in pity to her soul,

The tidings of her widowhood to seal ;

And put away the pining hope forlorn,
That made her grief more bitter to be borne.

And she was patient ; through the weary day

She toiled ; though none was there
her work to bless,

And did not wear the sullen months
away,

Nor call on death to end her wretchedness,

But lest the grief should overflow her breast,

She toiled as heretofore, and would not rest.

But, her work done, what time the evening star

Rose over the cool water, then she came

To the gray stone, and saw its light from far

Drop down the misty Mere white
lengths of flame,

And wondered whether there might be
the place

Where the soft ripple wandered o'er
his face.

Unfortunate ! In solitude forlorn

She dwelt, and thought upon her husband's grave,

Till when the days grew short a child
was born

To the dead father underneath the
wave ;

And it brought back a remnant of delight,

A little sunshine to its mother's sight ;

A little wonder to her heart grown
numb,

And a sweet yearning pitiful and
keen :

She took it as from that poor father
come,

Her and the misery to stand between ;
Her little maiden babe, who day by
day

Sucked at her breast and charmed her
woes away.

But years flew on ; the child was still
the same,

Nor human language she had learned
to speak ;

Her lips were mute, and seasons went
and came,

And brought fresh beauty to her tender
cheek ;

And all the day upon the sunny shore
She sat and mused beneath the sycamore.

Strange sympathy ! she watched and
weariest not,

Haply unconscious what it was she
sought ;

Her mother's tale she easily forgot,
And if she listened no warm tears it
brought ;

Though surely in the yearnings of her
heart

The unknown voyager must have had
his part.

Unknown to her ; like all she saw un-
known,

All sights were fresh as when they
first began,

All sounds were new ; each murmur
and each tone

And cause and consequence she could
not scan,
Forgot that night brought darkness in
its train,
Nor reasoned that the day would come
again.

There is a happiness in past regret ;
And echoes of the harshest sound
are sweet.
The mother's soul was struck with
grief, and yet,
Repeated in her child, 'twas not un-
meet
That echo-like the grief a tone should
take
Painless, but ever pensive for her sake ;

For her dear sake, whose patient soul
was linked
By ties so many to the babe unborn ;
Whose hope, by slow degrees become
extinct,
For evermore had left her child for-
lorn,
Yet left no consciousness of want or
woe,
Nor wonder vague that these things
should be so.

Truly her joys were limited and few,
But they sufficed a life to satisfy,
That neither fret nor dim foreboding
knew,
But breathed the air in a great har-
mony
With its own place and part, and was at
one
With all it knew of earth and moon and
sun.

For all of them were worked into the
dream,
The husky sighs of wheat-fields in it
wrought ;
All the land-miles belonged to it ; the
stream
That fed the Mere ran through it like
a thought.
It was a passion of peace, and loved to
wait
'Neath boughs with fair green light
illuminate ;

To wait with her alone ; always alone :
For any that drew near she heeded
not,
Wanting them little as the lily grown
Apart from others in a shady plot,
Wants fellow-lilies of like fair degree,
In her still glen to bear her company.

Always alone : and yet, there was a
child
Who loved this child, and, from his
turret towers,
Across the lea would roam to where,
inised
And fenced in rapturous silence, went
her hours,
And, with slow footsteps drawn anear
the place
Where mute she sat, would ponder on
her face,

And wonder at her with a childish awe,
And come again to look, and yet
again,
Till the sweet rippling of the Mere
would draw
His longing to itself ; while in her
train
The water-hen, come forth, would bring
her brood
From slumbering in the rushy solitude ;

Or to their young would curlews call
and clang
Their homeless young that down the
furrows creep ;
Or the wind-hover in the blue would
hang,
Still as a rock set in the watery deep.
Then from her presence he would break
away,
Unmarked, ungreeted yet, from day to
day.

But older grown, the Mere he haunted
yet,
And a strange joy from its sweet wild-
ness caught ;
Whilst careless sat alone maid Marga-
ret,
And "shut the gates" of silence on
her thought,

All through spring mornings gemmed
 with melted rime,
 All through hay-harvest and through
 gleaning time.

O pleasure for itself that boyhood
 makes,
 O happiness to roam the sighing
 shore,
 Plough up with elfin craft the water-
 flakes,
 And track the nested rail with cau-
 tious oar;
 Then floating lie and look with wonder
 new
 Straight up in the great dome of light
 and blue.

O pleasure! yet they took him from the
 wold,
 The reedy Mere, and all his pastime
 there,
 The place where he was born, and
 would grow old
 If God his life so many years should
 spare;
 From the loved haunts of childhood and
 the plain
 And pasture-lands of his own broad do-
 main.

And he came down when wheat was in
 the sheaf,
 And with her fruit the apple-branch
 bent low,
 While yet in August glory hung the
 leaf,
 And flowerless aftermath began to
 grow;
 He came from his gray turrets to the
 shore,
 And sought the maid beneath the sycam-
 ore.

He sought her, not because her tender
 eyes
 Would brighten at his coming, for he
 knew
 Full seldom any thought of him would
 rise
 In her fair breast when he had passed
 from view;

But for his own love's sake, that unbe-
 guiled
 Drew him in spirit to the silent child.

For boyhood in its better hour is prone
 To reverence what it hath not under-
 stood;
 And he had thought some heavenly
 meaning shone
 From her clear eyes, that made their
 watchings good;
 While a great peacefulness of shade
 was shed
 Like oil of consecration on her head.

A fishing wallet from his shoulder
 slung,
 With bounding foot he reached the
 mossy place,
 A little moment gently o'er her hung,
 Put back her hair and looked upon
 her face,
 Then fain from that deep dream to wake
 her yet,
 He "Margaret!" low murmured,
 "Margaret!"

"Look at me once before I leave the
 land,
 For I am going, — going, Margaret."
 And then she sighed, and, lifting up
 her hand,
 Laid it along his young fresh cheek,
 and set
 Upon his face those blue twin-deeps,
 her eyes,
 And moved it back from her in troubled
 wise,

Because he came between her and her
 fate,
 The Mere. She sighed again as one
 oppressed;
 The waters, shining clear, with deli-
 cate
 Reflections wavered on her blameless
 breast;
 And through the branches dropt, like
 flickerings fair,
 And played upon her hands and on her
 hair.

And he, withdrawn a little space to
 see,
 Murmured in tender ruth that was
 not pain,
 "Farewell, I go; but sometimes think
 of me,
 Maid Margaret;" and there came by
 again
 A whispering in the reed-beds and the
 sway
 Of waters: then he turned and went
 his way.

And wilt thou think on him now he is
 gone?
 No; thou wilt gaze: though thy
 young eyes grow dim,
 And thy soft cheek become all pale and
 wan,
 Still thou wilt gaze, and spend no
 thought on him;
 There is no sweetness in his laugh for
 thee —
 No beauty in his fresh heart's gayety.

But wherefore linger in deserted
 haunts?
 Why of the past, as if yet present,
 sing?
 The yellow iris on the margin flaunts,
 With hyacinth the banks are blue in
 spring,
 And under dappled clouds the lark
 afloat
 Pours all the April-tide from her sweet
 throat.

But Margaret—ah! thou art there no
 more,
 And thick dank moss creeps over thy
 gray stone;
 Thy path is lost that skirted the low
 shore,
 With willow-grass and speedwell over-
 grown;
 Thine eye has closed for ever, and thine
 ear
 Drinks in no more the music of the
 Mere.

The boy shall come — shall come again
 in spring,
 Well pleased that pastoral solitude
 to share,

And some kind offering in his hand will
 bring
 To cast into thy lap, O maid most
 fair —
 Some clasping gem about thy neck to
 rest,
 Or heave and glimmer on thy guileless
 breast.

And he shall wonder why thou art not
 here
 The solitude with "smiles to enter-
 tain,"
 And gaze along the reaches of the
 Mere;
 But he shall never see thy face
 again —
 Shall never see upon the reedy shore
 Maid Margaret beneath her sycamore.

 II.

MARGARET IN THE XEBEC.

[“Concerning this man (Robert Del-
 acour), little further is known than that
 he served in the king's army, and was
 wounded in the battle of Marston Moor,
 being then about twenty-seven years of
 age. After the battle of Nazeby, find-
 ing himself a marked man, he quitted
 the country, taking with him the child
 whom he had adopted; and he made
 many voyages between the different
 ports of the Mediterranean and Le-
 vant.”]

RESTING within his tent at turn of day,
 A wailing voice his scanty sleep beset:
 He started up—it did not flee away—
 'Twas no part of his dream, but still
 did fret
 And pine into his heart, “Ah me! ah
 me!”
 Broken with heaving sobs right mourn-
 fully.

Then he arose, and, troubled at this
 thing,
 All wearily toward the voice he went
 Over the down-trod bracken and the
 ling,

Until it brought him to a soldier's
tent,
Where, with the tears upon her face,
he found
A little maiden weeping on the ground ;

And backward in the tent an aged
crone
Upbraided her full harshly more and
more,
But sunk her chiding to an undertone
When she beheld him standing at
the door,
And calmed her voice, and dropped
her lifted hand,
And answered him with accent soft and
bland.

No, the young child was none of hers,
she said,
But she had found her where the ash
lay white
About a smouldering tent ; her infant
head
All shelterless, she through the dewy
night
Had slumbered on the field, — un-
gentle fate
For a lone child so soft and delicate.

“And I,” quoth she, “have tended
her with care,
And thought to be rewarded of her
kin,
For by her rich attire and features fair
I know her birth is gentle : yet
within
The tent unclaimed she doth but pine
and weep,
A burden I would fain no longer keep.”

Still while she spoke the little creature
wept,
Till painful pity touched him for the
flow
Of all those tears, and to his heart
there crept
A yearning as of fatherhood, and lo !
Reaching his arms to her, “My sweet,”
quoth he,
“Dear little madam, wilt thou come
with me?”

Then she left off her crying, and a look
Of wistful wonder stole into her eyes.
The sullen frown her dimpled face for-
sook,
She let him take her, and forgot her
sighs,
Contented in his alien arms to rest,
And lay her baby head upon his breast.

Ah, sure a stranger trust was never
sought
By any soldier on a battle-plain.
He brought her to his tent, and soothed
his voice,
Rough with command ; and asked,
but all in vain,
Her story, while her prattling tongue
rang sweet,
She playing, as one at home, about his
feet.

Of race, of country, or of parentage,
Her lisping accents nothing could
unfold ; —
No questioning could win to read the
page
Of her short life ; — she left her tale
untold,
And home and kin thus early to for-
get,
She only knew, — her name was —
Margaret.

Then in the dusk upon his arm it
chanced
That night that suddenly she fell
asleep ;
And he looked down on her like one
entranced,
And listened to her breathing still
and deep,
As if a little child, when daylight
closed,
With half-shut lids had ne'er before
reposed.

Softly he laid her down from off his
arm,
With earnest care and new-born ten-
derness :
Her infancy, a wonder-working charm,
Laid hold upon his love ; he stayed
to bless .

The small sweet head, then went he
forth that night
And sought a nurse to tend this new
delight.

And day by day his heart she wrought
upon,
And won her way into its inmost
fold —

A heart which, but for lack of that
whereon
To fix itself, would never have been
cold ;
And, opening wide, now let her come to
dwell
Within its strong unguarded citadel.

She, like a dream, unlocked the hidden
springs
Of his past thoughts, and set their
current free
To talk with him of half-forgotten
things —
The pureness and the peace of in-
fancy,
“Thou also, thou,” to sigh, “wert un-
defiled
(O God, the change!) once, as this little
child.”

The baby-mistress of a soldier's heart,
She had but friendlessness to stand
her friend,
And her own orphanhood to plead her
part,
When he, a wayfarer, did pause, and
bend,
And bear with him the starry blossom
sweet
Out of its jeopardy from trampling feet.

A gleam of light upon a rainy day,
A new-tied knot that must be severed
soon,
At sunrise once before his tent at
play,
And hurried from the battle-field at
noon,
While face to face in hostile ranks they
stood,
Who should have dwelt in peace and
brotherhood.

But ere the fight, when higher rose the
sun,
And yet were distant far the rebel
bands,
She heard at intervals a booming gun,
And she was pleased, and laughing
clapped her hands ;
Till he came in with troubled look and
tone,
Who chose her desolate to be his own.

And he said, “Little madam, now fare-
well,
For there will be a battle fought ere
night.
God be thy shield, for He alone can tell
Which way may fall the fortune of
the fight.
To fitter hands the care of thee pertain,
My dear, if we two never meet again.”

Then he gave money shortly to her
nurse,
And charged her straitly to depart in
haste,
And leave the plain, whereon the deadly
curse
Of war should light with ruin, death,
and waste,
And all the ills that must its presence
blight,
E'en if proud victory should bless the
right.

“But if the rebel cause should prosper,
then
It were not good among the hills to
wend ;
But journey through to Boston in the
fen,
And wait for peace, if peace our God
shall send ;
And if my life is spared, I will essay,”
Quoth he, “to join you there as best I
may.”

So then he kissed the child, and went
his way ;
But many troubles rolled above his
head ;
The sun arose on many an evil day,
And cruel deeds were done, and tears
were shed ;

And hope was lost, and loyal hearts
were fain
In dust to hide, — ere they two met
again.

So passed the little child from thought,
from view —
(The snowdrop blossoms, and then is
not there,
Forgotten till men welcome it anew),
He found her in his heavy days of
care,
And with her dimples was again be-
guiled,
As on her nurse's knee she sat and
smiled.

And he became a voyager by sea,
And took the child to share his wan-
dering state;
Since from his native land compelled to
flee,
And hopeless to avert her monarch's
fate;
For all was lost that might have made
him pause,
And, past a soldier's help, the royal
cause.

And thus rolled on long days, long
months and years,
And Margaret within the Xebec
sailed;
The lulling wind made music in her
ears,
And nothing to her life's complete-
ness failed.
Her pastime 'twas to see the dolphins
spring,
And wonderful live rainbows glimmer-
ing.

The gay sea-plants familiar were to her,
As daisies to the children of the land;
Red wavy dulse the sunburnt mariner
Raised from its bed to glisten in her
hand;
The vessel and the sea were her life's
stage —
Her house, her garden, and her hermit-
age.

Also she had a cabin of her own,
For beauty like an elfin palace
bright,
With Venice glass adorned and crystal
stone,
That trembled with a many-colored
light;
And there with two caged ringdoves
she did play,
And feed them carefully from day to
day.

Her bed with silken curtains was en-
closed,
White as the snowy rose of Guelder-
land;
On Turkish pillows her young head
reposed,
And love had gathered with a careful
hand
Fair playthings to the little maiden's
side,
From distant ports, and cities parted
wide.

She had two myrtle-plants that she did
tend,
And think all trees were like to them
that grew;
For things on land she did confuse and
blend,
And chiefly from the deck the land
she knew,
And in her heart she pitied more and
more
The steadfast dwellers on the change-
less shore.

Green fields and inland meadows faded
out
Of mind, or with sea images were
linked;
And yet she had her childish thoughts
about
The country she had left — though
indistinct
And faint as mist the mountain-head
that shrouds,
Or dim through distance as Magellan's
clouds.

And when to frame a forest scene she
tried,
The ever-present sea would yet in-
trude,
And all her towns were by the water's
side,
It murmured in all moorland soli-
tude,
Where rocks and the ribbed sand would
intervene,
And waves would edge her fancied vil-
lage green;

Because her heart was like an ocean
shell,
That holds (men say) a message from
the deep;
And yet the land was strong, she knew
its spell,
And harbor lights could draw her in
her sleep;
And minster chimes from piercèd tow-
ers that swim,
Were the land-angels making God a
hymn.

So she grew on, the idol of one heart,
And the delight of many — and her
face,
Thus dwelling chiefly from her sex
apart,
Was touched with a most deep and
tender grace —
A look that never aught but nature
gave,
Artless, yet thoughtful; innocent, yet
grave.

Strange her adornings were, and
strangely blent:
A golden net confined her nut-brown
hair;
Quaint were the robes that divers lands
had lent,
And quaint her aged nurse's skill and
care;
Yet did they well on the sea-maiden
meet,
Circle her neck, and grace her dimpled
feet.

The sailor folk were glad because of
her,
And deemed good fortune followed
in her wake;
She was their guardian saint, they did
aver —
Prosperous winds were sent them for
her sake;
And strange rough vows, strange pray-
ers, they nightly made,
While, storm or calm, she slept, in
nought afraid.

Clear were her eyes, that daughter of
the sea,
Sweet, when uplifted to her aged
nurse,
She sat, and communed what the world
could be;
And rambling stories caused her to
rehearse
How Yule was kept, how maidens
tossed the hay,
And how bells rang upon a wedding
day.

But they grew brighter when the even-
ing-star
First trembled over the still glowing
wave,
That bathed in ruddy light, mast, sail,
and spar;
For then, reclined in rest that twi-
light gave,
With him who served for father, friend,
and guide,
She sat upon the deck at eventide.

Then turned towards the west, that on
her hair
And her young cheek shed down its
tender glow,
He taught her many things with ear-
nest care
That he thought fitting a young
maid should know,
Told of the good deeds of the worthy
dead,
And prayers devout, by faithful martyrs
said.

And many psalms he caused her to repeat
 And sing them, at his knees reclined
 the while,
 And spoke with her of all things good
 and meet,
 And told the story of her native
 isle,
 Till at the end he made her tears to
 flow,
 Rehearsing of his royal master's woe.

And of the stars he taught her, and
 their names,
 And how the chartless mariner they
 guide;
 Of quivering light that in the zenith
 flames,
 Of monsters in the deep sea caves
 that hide;
 Then changed the theme to fairy rec-
 ords wild,
 Enchanted moor, elf dame, or change-
 ling child.

To her the Eastern lands their strange-
 ness spread,
 The dark-faced Arab in his long blue
 gown,
 The camel thrusting down a snake-like
 head
 To browse on thorns outside a walled
 white town,
 Where palmy clusters rank by rank up-
 right
 Float as in quivering lakes of ribbed
 light.

And when the ship sat like a broad-
 winged bird
 Becalm'd, lo, lions answered in the
 night
 Their fellows, all the hollow dark was
 stirred
 To echo on that tremulous thunder's
 flight,
 Dying in weird faint moans; — till, look!
 the sun
 And night, and all the things of night,
 were done.

And they, toward the waste as morning
 brake,
 Turned, where, insid'd in his green
 watered land,
 The Lybian Zeus lay couched of old,
 and spake,
 Hemmed in with leagues of furrow-
 faced sand —
 Then saw the moon (like Joseph's
 golden cup
 Come back) behind some ruined roof
 swim up.

But blooming childhood will not always
 last,
 And storms will rise e'en on the tide-
 less sea;
 His guardian love took fright, she grew
 so fast,
 And he began to think how sad 'twould
 be
 If he should die, and pirate hordes
 should get
 By sword or shipwreck his fair Mar-
 garet.

It was a sudden thought; but he gave
 way,
 For it assailed him with unwonted
 force;
 And, with no more than one short
 week's delay,
 For English shores he shaped the
 vessel's course;
 And ten years absent saw her landed
 now,
 With thirteen summers on her maiden
 brow.

And so he journeyed with her, far in-
 land,
 Down quiet lanes, by hedges gemmed
 with dew,
 Where wonders met her eye on every
 hand,
 And all was beautiful and strange and
 new —
 All, from the forest trees in stately
 ranks,
 To yellow cowslips trembling on the
 banks.

All new — the long-drawn slope of even-
ing shades

The sweet solemnities of waxing
light,

The white-haired boys, the blushing
rustic maids,

The ruddy gleam through cottage
casements bright,

The green of pastures, bloom of garden
nooks,

And endless bubbling of the water-
brooks.

So far he took them on through this
green land,

The maiden and her nurse, till jour-
neying

They saw at last a peaceful city stand
On a steep mount, and heard its clear
bells ring.

High were the towers and rich with
ancient state,

In its old wall enclosed and massive
gate.

There dwelt a worthy matron whom he
knew,

To whom in time of war he gave
good aid,

Shielding her household from the plun-
dering crew

When neither law could bind nor
worth persuade:

And to her house he brought his care
and pride,

Aweary with the way and sleepy-eyed.

And he, the man whom she was fain to
serve,

Delayed not shortly his request to
make,

Which was, if aught of her he did de-
serve,

To take the maid, and rear her for
his sake,

To guard her youth, and let her breed-
ing be

In womanly reserve and modesty.

And that same night into the house he
brought

The costly fruits of all his voyages —

Rich Indian gems of wandering crafts-
men wrought,

Long ropes of pearls from Persian
palaces,

With ingots pure and coins of Venice
mould,

And silver bars and bags of Spanish
gold;

And costly merchandise of far-off
lands,

And golden stuffs and shawls of
Eastern dye,

He gave them over to the matron's
hands,

With jewelled gauds, and toys of
ivory,

To be her dower on whom his love was
set, —

His dearest child, fair Madam Marga-
ret.

Then he entreated, that if he should
die,

She would not cease her guardian
mission mild.

Awhile, as undecided, lingered nigh,
Beside the pillow of the sleeping
child,

Severed one wandering lock of wavy
hair,

Took horse that night, and left her
unaware.

And it was long before he came
again —

So long that Margaret was woman
grown;

And oft she wished for his return in
vain,

Calling him softly in an undertone;
Repeating words that he had said the
while,

And striving to recall his look and
smile.

If she had known — oh, if she could
have known —

The toils, the hardships of those ab-
sent years —

How bitter thralldom forced the unwill-
ing groan —

How slavery wrung out subduing
tears,
Not calmly had she passed her hours
away,
Chiding half pettishly the long delay.

But she was spared. She knew no
sense of harm,
While the red flames ascended from
the deck;
Saw not the pirate band the crew dis-
arm,
Mourned not the floating spars, the
smoking wreck.
She did not dream, and there was none
to tell
That fetters bound the hands she loved
so well.

Sweet Margaret — withdrawn from hu-
man view;

She spent long hours beneath the
cedar shade,
The stately trees that in the garden
grew,
And, overtwin'd, a towering shelter
made;
She mused among the flowers, and
birds, and bees,
In winding walks, and bowering cano-
pies;

Or wandered slowly through the an-
cient rooms,

Where oriel windows shed their rain-
bow gleams;

And tapestried hangings, wrought in
Flemish looms,

Displayed the story of King Pha-
raoh's dreams;

And, come at noon because the well
was deep,

Beautiful Rachel leading down her
sheep.

At last she reached the bloom of
womanhood,

After five summers spent in growing
fair;

Her face betokened all things dear and
good,

The light of somewhat yet to come
was there

Asleep, and waiting for the opening
day,
When childish thoughts, like flowers,
would drift away.

O! we are far too happy while they
last;

We have our good things first, and
they cost naught;

Then the new splendor comes unfath-
omed, vast,

A costly trouble, ay, a sumptuous
thought,

And will not wait, and cannot be pos-
sessed,

Though infinite yearnings fold it to the
breast.

And time, that seemed so long, is
fleeting by,

And life is more than life; love more
than love;

We have not found the whole — and
we must die —

And still the unclasped glory floats
above.

The inmost and the utmost faint from
sight,

For ever secret in their veil of light.

Be not too hasty in your flow, you
rhymes,

For Margaret is in her garden bower;
Delay to ring, you soft cathedral

chimes,

And tell not out too soon the noon-
tide hour:

For one draws nearer to your ancient
town,

On the green mount down settled like
a crown.

He journeyed on, and, as he neared the
gate,

He met with one to whom he named
the maid,

Inquiring of her welfare, and her state,
And of the matron in whose house

she stayed.

"The maiden dwelt there yet," the
townsman said;

"But, for the ancient lady, — she was
dead."

He further said, she was but little known,

Although reputed to be very fair,
And little seen (so much she dwelt alone)

But with her nurse at stated morning prayer ;

So seldom passed her sheltering garden wall,

Or left the gate at quiet evening fall.

Flow softly, rhymes — his hand is on the door ;

Ring out, ye noonday bells, his welcoming —

“He went out rich, but he returneth poor ;”

And strong — now something bowed with suffering ;

And on his brow are traced long furrowed lines,

Earned in the fight with pirate Algerines.

Her aged nurse comes hobbling at his call ;

Lifts up her withered hand in dull surprise,

And, tottering, leads him through the pillared hall ;

“What! come at last to bless my lady’s eyes!

Dear heart, sweet heart, she’s grown a likesome maid —

Go, seek her where she sitteth in the shade.”

The noonday chime had ceased — she did not know

Who watched her, while her ringdoves fluttered near :

While, under the green boughs, in accents low

She sang unto herself. She did not hear

His footstep till she turned, then rose to meet

Her guest with guileless blush and wonder sweet.

But soon she knew him, came with quickened pace,

And put her gentle hands about his neck ;

And leaned her fair cheek to his sunburned face,

As long ago upon the vessel’s deck :
As long ago she did in twilight deep,

When heaving waters lulled her infant sleep.

So then he kissed her, as men kiss their own,

And, proudly parting her unbraided hair,

He said: “I did not think to see thee grown

So fair a woman,” — but a touch of care

The deep-toned voice through its caressing kept,

And, hearing it, she turned away and wept.

Wept, — for an impress on the face she viewed —

The stamp of feelings she remembered not ;

His voice was calmer now, but more subdued,

Not like the voice long loved and unforgot!

She felt strange sorrow and delightful pain —

Grief for the change, joy that he came again.

O pleasant days, that followed his return,

That made his captive years pass out of mind ;

If life had yet new pains for him to learn,

Not in the maid’s clear eyes he saw it shrined ;

And three full weeks he stayed with her, content

To find her beautiful and innocent.

It was all one in his contented sight

As though she were a child, till suddenly,

Waked of the chimes in the dead time of the night,

He fell to thinking how the urgency

Of Fate had dealt with him, and could
 but sigh
 For those best things wherein she
 passed him by.

Down the long river of life how, cast
 adrift,
 She urged him on, still on, to sink or
 swim;

And all at once, as if a veil did lift,
 In the dead time of the night, and
 bare to him
 The want in his deep soul, he looked,
 was dumb,
 And knew himself, and knew his time
 was come.

In the dead time of the night his soul
 did sound

The dark sea of a trouble unforeseen,
 For that one sweet that to his life was
 bound

Had turned into a want—a misery
 keen:

Was born, was grown, and wounded
 sorely cried

All 'twixt the midnight and the morn-
 ing tide.

He was a brave man, and he took this
 thing

And cast it from him with a man's
 strong hand;

And that next morn, with no sweet
 altering

Of mien, beside the maid he took his
 stand,

And copied his past self till ebbing day
 Paled its deep western blush, and died
 away.

And then he told her that he must de-
 part

Upon the morrow, with the earliest
 light;

And it displeased and pained her at the
 heart,

And she went out to hide her from
 his sight

Aneath the cedar trees, where dusk was
 deep,

And be apart from him awhile to weep

And to lament, till, suddenly aware
 Of steps, she started up as fain to
 flee,

And met him in the moonlight pacing
 there,

Who questioned with her why her
 tears might be,

Till she did answer him, all red for
 shame,

"Kind sir, I weep—the wanting of a
 name."

"A name!" quoth he, and sighed. "I
 never knew

Thy father's name; but many a stal-
 wart youth

Would give thee his, dear child, and his
 love too,

And count himself a happy man for-
 sooth.

Is there none here who thy kind thought
 hath won?"

But she did falter, and made answer,
 "None."

Then, as in father-like and kindly
 mood,

He said, "Dear daughter, it would
 please me well

To see thee wed; for know it is not
 good

That a fair woman thus alone should
 dwell."

She said, "I am content it should be
 so,

If when you journey I may with you
 go."

This when he heard, he thought, right
 sick at heart,

Must I withstand myself, and also
 thee?

Thou, also thou! must nobly do thy
 part;

That honor leads thee on which holds
 back me.

No, thou sweet woman; by love's great
 increase,

I will reject thee for thy truer peace.

Then said he, "Lady! — look upon my face;

Consider well this scar upon my brow;

I have had all misfortune but disgrace;
I do not look for marriage blessings now.

Be not thy gratitude deceived. I know
Thou think'st it is thy duty — I will go!

"I read thy meaning, and I go from hence,

Skilled in the reason; though my heart be rude,

I will not wrong thy gentle innocence,
Nor take advantage of thy gratitude,
But think, while yet the light these eyes
shall bless,

The more for thee — of woman's nobleness."

Faultless and fair, all in the moony light,

As one ashamed, she looked upon the ground,

And her white raiment glistened in his sight.

And, hark! the vesper chimes began to sound,

Then lower yet she drooped her young, pure cheek,

And still was she ashamed, and could not speak.

A swarm of bells from that old tower o'erhead,

They sent their message sifting through the boughs

Of cedars; when they ceased his lady said,

"Pray you forgive me," and her lovely brows

She lifted, standing in her moonlit place,

And one short moment looked him in the face.

Then straight he cried, "O sweetheart, think all one

As no word yet were said between us twain,

And know thou that in this I yield to none —

I love thee, sweetheart, love thee!"
so full fain,

While she did leave to silence all her part,

He took the gleaming whiteness to his heart —

The white-robed maiden with the warm white throat,

The sweet white brow, and locks of umber flow,

Whose murmuring voice was soft as rock-dove's note,

Entreating him, and saying, "Do not go!"

"I will not, sweetheart; nay, not now," quoth he,

"By faith and troth, I think thou art for me!"

And so she won a name that eventide,
Which he gave gladly, but would

ne'er bespeak,

And she became the rough sea-captain's bride,

Matching her dimples to his sunburnt cheek;

And chasing from his voice the touch of care,

That made her weep when first she heard it there.

One year there was, fulfilled of happiness,

But O! it went so fast, too fast away.

Then came that trouble which full oft doth bless —

It was the evening of a sultry day,

There was no wind the thread-hung flowers to stir,

Or float abroad the filmy gossamer.

Toward the trees his steps the mariner bent,

Pacing the grassy walks with restless feet:

And he recalled, and pondered as he went,

All her most duteous love and converse sweet,

Till summer darkness settled deep and dim,
And dew from bending leaves dropt down on him.

The flowers sent forth their nightly odors faint —
Thick leaves shut out the starlight overhead;
While he told over, as by strong constraint
Drawn on, her childish life on ship-board led,
And beauteous youth, since first low kneeling there,
With folded hands she lisped her evening prayer.

Then he remembered how, beneath the shade,
She wooed him to her with her lovely words,
While flowers were closing, leaves in moonlight played,
And in dark nooks withdrew the silent birds.
So pondered he that night in twilight dim,
While dew from bending leaves dropt down on him.

The flowers sent forth their nightly odors faint —
When, in the darkness waiting, he saw one
To whom he said — "How fareth my sweet saint?"
Who answered — "She hath borne to you a son;"
Then, turning, left him, — and the father said,
"God rain down blessings on his welcome head!"

But, Margaret! — *she* never saw the child,
Nor heard about her bed love's mournful wails;
But to the last, with ocean dreams beguiled,
Murmured of troubled seas and swelling sails —

Of weary voyages, and rocks unseen,
And distant hills in sight, all calm and green. . . .

Woe and alas! — the times of sorrow come,
And make us doubt if we were ever glad!
So utterly that inner voice is dumb,
Whose music through our happy days we had!
So, at the touch of grief, without our will,
The sweet voice drops from us, and all is still.

Woe and alas! for the sea-captain's wife —
That Margaret who in the Xebec played —
She spent upon his knee her baby life;
Her slumbering head upon his breast she laid.
How shall he learn alone his years to pass?
How in the empty house? — woe and alas!

She died, and in the aisle, the minster aisle,
They made her grave; and there, with fond intent,
Her husband raised, his sorrow to beguile,
A very fair and stately monument:
Her tomb (the careless vergers show it yet),
The mariner's wife, his love, his Margaret.

A woman's figure, with the eyelids closed,
The quiet head declined in slumber sweet;
Upon an anchor one fair hand reposed,
And a long ensign folded at her feet,
And carved upon the bordering of her vest
The motto of her house — "*We giveth rest.*"

There is an ancient window richly
 fraught
 And fretted with all hues most rich,
 most bright,
And in its upper tracery enwrought
 An olive-branch and dove wide-
 winged and white,
An emblem meet for her, the tender
 dove,
Her heavenly peace, her duteous earthly
 love.

Amid heraldic shields and banners
 set,
 In twisted knots and wildly-tangled
 bands,
Crimson and green, and gold and violet,
 Fall softly on the snowy sculptured
 hands;
And, when the sunshine comes, full
 sweetly rest
The dove and olive-branch upon her
 breast.

NOTES.

"THE DREAMS THAT CAME TRUE."

Page 97.

THIS story I first wrote in prose, and it was published some years ago.

"A STORY OF DOOM."

Page 136.

The name of the patriarch's wife is intended to be pronounced Nigh-loi-ya.

Of the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japhet—I have called Japhet the youngest (because he is always named last), and have supposed that, in the genealogies where he is called "Japhet the elder," he may have received the epithet because by that time there were younger Japhets.

Page 168.

The quivering butterflies in companies,
That slowly crept adown the sandy marge,
Like *living crocus beds*.

This beautiful comparison is taken from "The Naturalist on the River Amazons." "Vast numbers of orange-colored butterflies congregated on the moist sands. They assembled in densely-packed masses, sometimes two or three yards in circumference, their wings all held in an upright position, so that the sands looked as though variegated with *beds of crocuses*."

"GLADYS AND HER ISLAND."

Page 189.

The woman is Imagination ; she is brooding over what she brought forth.

The two purple peaks represent the domains of Poetry and of History.

The girl is Fancy.

"WINSTANLEY."

Page 210.

This ballad was intended to be one of a set, and was read to the children in the National Schools at Sherborne, Dorsetshire, in order to discover whether, if the actions of a hero were simply and plainly narrated, English children would like to learn the verses recording them by heart, as their forefathers did.

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